KUCHING

VISITORS' GUIDE 2009-2010









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Photos by Sarawak Tourism Board (except where credited)

This guide focuses on Kuching and the surrounding area. In order to provide as much local detail as possible, we have not included information on immigration requirements, exchange rates, climate, etc. These details are readily available from popular guidebooks.

All information is correct at the time of printing, but is subject to change without notice.

Front cover: Cat Statue, view of the Astana, Orang Utan at Semenggoh and Orang Ulu Longhouse at Sarawak Cultural Village

First Impressions



Kuching, the capital of Sarawak, Malaysia's largest state, is simply unique. No other city in Malaysia has such a romantic and unlikely history. And no other city in Malaysia displays its charms with such an easy grace. The residents of Kuching (pop. 600,000 approx.) enjoy living here, and take great pride in their fascinating city, a pride that is reflected in their attitude to visitors. Kuching welcomes visitors warmly, but it does not put on an act for them. Instead it goes about its own business in a relaxed manner that hasn't changed in 150 years. It is impossible to really enjoy Kuching from the air conditioned comfort of a tour bus. To make the most of your visit you must put on your walking shoes, take to the streets (and the water), and join in.

Like all towns and cities in Borneo, the focal point of Kuching, and the reason for its existence, is the river. Hiring a *sampan* to meander slowly up and down the Sarawak River is the best way to get your first impression of Kuching, and a real bargain. It's good during the day, bliss at sunset and a truly one-off experience at night. From the river you will see picturesque Malay villages (*kampungs*), a golden-domed mosque, a Victorian fort, a whole street of 19th century Chinese shophouses and an imposing wooden-roofed palace, all set against a background of distant mountains.

Kuching's city centre is well preserved and very compact; virtually everything that is worth seeing can be reached on foot or by sampan. The narrow, bustling streets are crammed with shops selling all manner of goods, from the mundane to the exotic. There are ornate Chinese temples, many fine examples of colonial-style architecture, a beautiful waterfront and a number of interesting museums, including the historic Sarawak Museum. There is an excellent range of accommodation, from luxury to budget, good restaurants, and nightlife to suit every taste and pocket. You can try local delicacies such as deer meat and jungle fern, drink a glass or two of *tuak* (local rice wine), or feast on a vast array of seafood dishes.



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Kuching has an unusual name - the word means "cat" in Malay. There are a number of stories as to how this name came about, but it is unlikely that it has anything to do with cats. The two more likely explanations are that it derives from the Chinese word *kochin*, meaning "harbour," or that it is named after the *mata kuching* or "cat's eye" fruit, a close relative of the lychee that grows widely here.

Sarawak is a unique and enjoyable tourism destination, and Kuching is the ideal base from which to go exploring. There are a number of national parks nearby including the famous Bako, home of the rare proboscis monkey, Gunung Gading, where giant *rafflesia* flowers bloom, the Kuching Wetlands, which protects a fascinating mangrove ecosystem, Kubah, with its rare palms and orchids, and the Matang Wildlife Centre. Literally hundreds of Iban and Bidayuh longhouses are within easy travelling distance. Damai, on the nearby Santubong Peninsula is Sarawak's main resort area, and many travel agents offer "two-centre" packages allowing you to explore Kuching, go on a longhouse trip, visit Bako and the rainforest and then relax on the beach after the rigours of jungle trekking. See the **Damai and Santubong** section for details.

The People







Kuching is a cosmopolitan city, and this is reflected in the faces on the streets. Whilst the population is predominantly Chinese and Malay, Kuching is home to people from virtually all of Sarawak's 26-plus ethnic groups. As well as Bidayuhs (formerly known as Land Dayaks) and Ibans (Sea Dayaks), you are sure to encounter Melanaus from the coastal areas and Orang Ulu (literally "upriver people"), the collective name given to the smaller indigenous societies, including Kayan, Kenyah, Kelabit, Berawan, Lun Bawang, Penan, etc. All are thoroughly modern Malaysians nowadays, but many of the rural people still live in longhouse communities.

This rich and varied cultural heritage makes Kuching a great place to buy native handicrafts, as all of Sarawak's ethnic groups produce excellent craftsmen and women. The variety of goods on offer is simply enormous (see **Shopping** section). Kuching is also the ideal base for visiting longhouses (see **Longhouse Tours** section). Local travel agents have a variety of tours, ranging from half-day trips to nearby Bidayuh longhouses, to week-long safaris to Iban longhouses on the Skrang, Lemanak, Batang Ai and Rejang rivers. Longhouse visits are always interesting and invariably great fun.

History - The White Rajahs



Kuching's history is also Sarawak's; the kind of adventure story that would be unbelievable if it were not true. Local bookshops are crammed with volumes old and new describing the reign of the White Rajahs in great detail. What follows is a brief summary.

At the beginning of the 19th century, Sarawak was a typical Malay principality, under the control of the Sultan of Brunei. Apart from occasional piracy on the coast and headhunting in the interior, Sarawak was peaceful. All of this changed when the Sultan of Brunei appointed a hugely unpopular Governor. The Malays and Bidayuhs of the Sarawak River revolted in 1836 and declared independence. An ugly guerrilla war ensued, which continued until 1839, when James Brooke, a young, wealthy Englishman arrived on the scene in his well-armed yacht, The Royalist.

Brooke set himself up as a freelance adventurer and the Sultan's uncle immediately asked him to help put down the rebellion. Brooke readily agreed. The spears and muskets of the rebels were no match for a modern warship, and the conflict soon ended. As a reward, the grateful Sultan made Brooke the Rajah of Sarawak in 1841. Brooke was not content to rule over a small riverside town, and set out to pacify his new kingdom, with the help of the British Navy. At the time of his death in 1868, Sarawak was a relatively peaceful territory covering the area between Tanjung Datu (which is now the Indonesian border) and Kuching.



James Brooke's nephew Charles, who succeeded him, was no adventurer like his uncle, but an excellent administrator and politician. He set up a proper system of government, gradually expanding his area of control until it formed the present day Sarawak. His legacy is everywhere in Kuching. It was he who built the Astana, Fort Margherita, the Courthouse, the Sarawak Museum and many other fine buildings. Charles Brooke died in 1917, and was succeeded by his son, Charles Vyner Brooke, who built on his father's achievements and improved the general administration of the state. In 1941 he set up a State Council to oversee the passing of new laws, bringing the first stirrings of democracy to Sarawak. The rule of the State Council was short-lived, as the Japanese invaded at the end of the same year.

When the Japanese surrendered in September 1945, Sarawak came under Australian military administration. Vyner Brooke felt the state would be better off as a colony and ceded it to Britain. This move was very unpopular and resulted in the assassination of the Governor, Duncan Stewart, in 1949. Order was eventually restored and the colonial administration concentrated on preparing Sarawak for independence. In 1963, Sarawak and Sabah gained independence by joining with Malaya to form the new nation of Malaysia.

The City Centre



Kuching Waterfront, a major restoration and land reclamation project, has become the most popular meeting place in the city. Drab warehouses have been replaced with an almost 900 m long esplanade, beautifully landscaped and dotted with wooden benches, food stalls, restaurants and entertainment facilities. A number of older buildings have been preserved and incorporated into the design, including the Chinese History Museum (see **Museums** section), the Sarawak Steamship Building, an open-air theatre and the Square Tower. Modern additions to the Waterfront include a restored Chinese pavilion, colourful musical fountains, and a number of modern sculptures. During the daytime, the Waterfront offers excellent views of the Astana, Fort Margherita and the Malay kampungs which line the north bank of the river, but at night-time it really comes alive; it seems like half of Kuching is out meeting friends, watching a show, or just taking the air.

Main Bazaar, opposite the Waterfront, is the oldest street in the city and the heart of old Kuching. It has some superb examples of Chinese shophouse architecture, many of which have been occupied by the same family for generations. These families still pursue traditional occupations such as tin-smithing, carpentry and petty trading. Kuching's highest concentration of antique and handicraft shops are to be found here, and shoppers can rest between bargaining sessions in a number of old-fashioned coffee shops with panelled walls and marble-topped tables.



Jalan Carpenter, parallel to Main Bazaar, has a similar selection of small traders and coffee shops, as well as food stalls and two small Chinese temples. The whole area oozes charm and character. Off Leboh China (Upper China St.) there is a row of perfectly preserved 19th century Chinese houses.

The ornately decorated **Tua Pek Kong Temple** is located on Jln Tunku Abdul Rahman, opposite the Waterfront, and is the oldest Chinese temple in Kuching. It is believed to date from 1843, although official records only recognise its existence since 1876. The Wang Kang festival to commemorate the dead is held here.





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The present day **Kuching Mosque**, previously the State Mosque, is best seen from the river. It was built in 1968, and its gilded cupolas make it one of the city's most striking landmarks, particularly at sunset. The site originally housed an old wooden mosque built in 1852. The new **State Mosque** is situated across river at Petra Jaya. It is a striking design, featuring a single cupola and Italian marble interior detailing. ***Note***: Visitors to mosques are requested to dress respectfully and remove their shoes. Non-Muslims may not enter during prayer times.

The Malay Kampungs (villages) along the riverside next to Fort Margherita are seldom visited by tourists, which is surprising as they have some beautiful examples of traditional and modern Malay architecture. There are some more superb Malay houses around Jln Datuk Ajibah Abol, behind the Kuching Mosque. Both these areas are particularly noteworthy as they are self-contained, intact communities existing within a modern city.

Civic Centre. The futuristic Civic Centre tower offers the best all-round views of Kuching and the surrounding area. The city and its hinterland, Mount Serapi, Mount Santubong and even the mountains of Kalimantan are visible on a clear day.

Historic Buildings and the Brooke Legacy



The Astana, the imposing palace on the north bank of the river opposite the Waterfront, was built in 1870 by Charles Brooke as a bridal gift to his wife Margaret. It is nowadays the official residence of the Governor of Sarawak, and therefore not open to visitors.



Fort Margherita was built in 1879 to guard Kuching's river approaches from pirates. Named after Charles Brooke's wife, Ranee Margaret, it is an extremely attractive and interesting building. As the Fort is situated within the police training barracks, visitors may be asked for some form of ID. Sampans go to the Fort from various Waterfront jetties.

The Square Tower on the Waterfront was built in 1879 as a fortress, fortunately never fired a shot in anger, unlike its wooden predecessor which was burnt down in the 1857 gold miners' rebellion.



The **Sarawak Steamship Building** on the Waterfront was built in 1930, and was previously the offices and warehouse of the Sarawak Steamship Company. It now the home of the **Kuching Waterfront Bazaar**, with dozens of stalls selling a wide range of handicrafts and souvenirs.





The **Court House Complex** (junction of Main Bazaar and Jalan Tun Abang Haji Openg, facing the Waterfront) was built in 1871 as the seat of Sarawak's government, and was used for this purpose as late as 1973. It is a superb collection of buildings, with magnificent belian (ironwood) roofs and beautiful detailing inside and out, reflecting local art forms. The colonial-baroque **Clock Tower** was added in 1883 and the **Charles Brooke Memorial** in 1924. The complex also includes **The Pavilion Building** - a piece of old New Orleans transplanted to Kuching, completed in 1909 used for many years as the General Hospital and now transformed into Sarawak's **Textile Museum** - and **The Round Tower**, originally planned as a fort (1886), then used as a dispensary, and nowadays the headquarters of the **Sarawak Craft Council**. Following restoration of the original buildings and redevelopment, this important heritage site reopened in 2003. Now known as the **Sarawak Tourism Complex**, the area also houses the **Visitor Information Centre**.

The **Main Post Office** on Jln Tun Haji Openg is another good example of Kuching's cosmopolitan architectural mix. Built in 1931, it appears to belong to the early 19th century with its neo-classical style and Corinthian columns.



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Museums



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The Sarawak Museum, straddling both sides of Jln Tun Abang Haji Openg, has one of the best collections in Southeast Asia. The old wing, opened in 1891, is designed in the style of a Normandy town-house. It houses an exceptional ethnographic collection, some good natural history displays and a section on the oil industry in Sarawak. The exhibition of traditional wood-carvings on the first floor is magnificent. The new wing across the footbridge is used for events and exhibitions. In the Museum grounds there is an **Aquarium**, the **Botanical Gardens** and the **Heroes' Memorial**. Open daily from 9 am to 6 pm. Admission free.

The **Islamic Museum** is open daily from 9 am to 4.30 pm. It is located on Jln P. Ramlee in the beautifully restored Maderasah Melayu Building (1930). It is also accessible from the rear of the Sarawak Museum's new wing. The Islamic Museum presents a clear picture of the rich historical heritage and special culture of the Muslim community in Sarawak and throughout the Malay-Indonesian archipelago, and traces connections with the development of Islam in the rest of the World. The museum consists of 7 galleries set around a central courtyard garden, each with a different theme.

The **Chinese History Museum** is situated on the Waterfront opposite the Tua Pek Kong temple. It traces the history of the Chinese community in Sarawak. Exhibits include the early trade routes, initial migration from various regions of China, geographical distribution, the early pioneers, traditional trading activities, the formation of trade and community associations, political history and the involvement of the Chinese community in modern, multi-racial Sarawak. Tel: 231520. Open daily 9 am to 4.30 pm.



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The **Textile Museum**, housed in the Pavilion Building opposite the Main Post Office on Jln Tun Haji Abang Openg, showcases Sarawak's fascinating traditional textiles, most notable of which are the Iban *pua kumbu* and the Malay *kain songket*. Open daily 9 am to 4.30 pm.



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Textile buffs interested in a more hands on look at textiles should not miss the **Tun Jugah Museum**, 4th Floor, Tun Jugah Tower. Run by the private Tun Jugah Foundation, it houses a superb collection of Iban *pua kumbu* textiles, both antique and modern, as well as exquisite Iban silverware and jewellery. You can also watch the weavers at work, or even learn the craft yourself (if you have a year or two to spare). Visitors are very welcome, but large groups should make an appointment beforehand. Call the curator on Tel: 239672, Fax: 412185, Email: jrn@po.jari ng.my. Open Mon - Fri 9 - 12 am, 1 - 4.30 pm.



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More textiles and other handicrafts can be found at the **Sarakraf Pavilion**, at 78 Jalan Tabuan. This Chinese-Colonial style mansion houses a workshop where a wide range of crafts are demonstrated. A huge variety of authentic Sarawak handicrafts are on sale, visitors may sign up for courses to study many different types of craft skills, and traditional dance lessons are also offered. Open daily 9 am - 5 pm. For further details see their listing under Shopping.

Another good place to see authentic Sarawak handicrafts being made is the **Sarawak Handicraft Centre** in the Round Tower (see Court House Complex earlier in this chapter). Groups of craftspeople from rural villages and longhouses demonstrate their skills in various types of Sarawak crafts, rotating on a monthly basis. The centre also has interesting handicraft displays, and a resource centre with a library and handicraft videos. Tel: 425652, website: www.sarawakhandicraft.com. Open Mon-Fri 8.30 am - 12.30 pm (11.30 pm Fri) and 2 pm - 5 pm, weekends and public holidays 8.30 am - 12.00 midday.

The World's first **Cat Museum**, devoted to all things feline, is in Petra Jaya in the Kuching City North City Hall. Cat lovers will find a range of exhibits, photos, feline art and cat souvenirs. Tel: 446688. Open daily 9 am to 5 pm (closed public holidays). Admission free, camera fee RM 3, video fee RM 5. Petra Jaya Transport bus No 2C or 2D.



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The **Timber Museum** is situated in the Sarawak Timber Industry Development Council building (Wisma Sumber Alam) in Petra Jaya. Anyone with an interest in forestry, traditional wood items, forest products and the development of the timber industry should head here. Tel: 443477. Mon-Fri 8.30 am - 5 pm. Petra Jaya Bus No. 6, then 10 mins walk.

The **Sarawak State Library**, an elegant modern building in Petra Jaya, has extensive databases on almost everything you could want to know about Sarawak. Tel: 442000. Open Mon. 2 pm - 9 pm, Tue-Sat 10 am - 9 pm, closed most public holidays. Petra Jaya Bus No. 6. The library enforces a strict dress code - smart casual is the order of the day.

The **Society Atelier Sarawak** is involved in promoting the arts and crafts of Sarawak. Phone for details of current or forthcoming activities. Rumah Masra, Jln Taman Budaya, 93000 Kuching. Tel: 243222.

Streetlife

The **Sunday Market**, which actually starts on Saturday afternoon, is held at Jln Satok. It is renowned for the Bidayuh ladies who set up shop here selling fruit and vegetables, but there are also many good Chinese and Malay stalls. Goods on offer include handicrafts, forest produce (including delicious wild honey), pets of all descriptions, orchid plants, live fish, and a whole range of local snacks and delicacies. The market is a must for weekend visitors, as it is very colourful and teeming with shoppers. The best time to go is Saturday night or early Sunday morning.



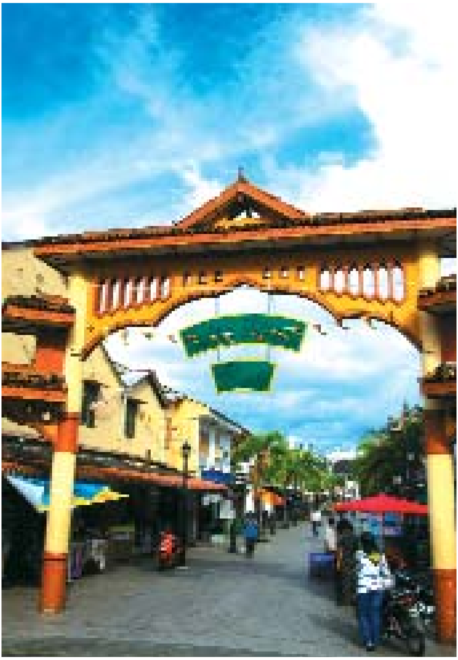
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Jln Padungan is lined with Chinese shophouses, mostly built in the 1920's and 30's during the rubber boom. Some are very elegantly decorated, and a walk round the back of the buildings can reveal fascinating architectural details. The area has some excellent coffee shops and restaurants, more handicraft shops and some unusual specialist retailers. The Great Cat of Kuching, a monumental kitsch statue, is situated at the junction of Jln Padungan and Jln Central. After years of being the king of kitsch, the Great Cat now has a competitor - the Cat Statue opposite Hotel Grand Margherita.

Jln India is lined with shops selling all kinds of goods, particularly textiles. Mid-way down Jln India (if you can find it!) there is a narrow passageway that leads to **Jln Gambier**. If you follow this passageway you'll pass a small Mosque hidden away in the middle of the city. The Mosque's structure has undergone many changes since it was originally built by Kuching's Indian Muslim community in the mid 19th century.



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The Santubong Peninsula is located at the West Mouth of the Sarawak River. At its northern tip, Mount Santubong (810 m) rises majestically from the sea. The area has been settled since ancient times, and was once a major trading centre. Nowadays the Peninsula, particularly Damai, is a popular beach resort area and a good base for discovering the charms of Southwest Sarawak. All manner of attractions are here; sleepy fishing villages, primary rainforest, superb seafood restaurants, an Arnold Palmer-designed golf course, a "living museum", and a choice of beach resort hotels. On a clear day, the Santubong area offers spectacular sunsets, as the sun sinks slowly into the sea framed by Sarawak's rolling hills on one side and scattered islands on the other.

Only 35 minutes drive from Kuching, the Santubong area has a great deal to offer the visitor. It has some superb natural attractions centred on the rainforested slopes of Mount Santubong, its mangrove forests, rivers, near shore waters and mudflats. These different habitats are home to variety of wildlife making Santubong one of the best sites in Sarawak to see a range of wildlife in a natural setting.

A number of tours and excursions can be made from the various hotels at Damai or from Kuching. These include jungle treks to the summit of Mount Santubong, Irrawaddy dolphin watching tours, river cruises and wildlife watching tours in and around the Kuching Wetlands National Park, and bird watching at Buntal - one of Malaysia's most important sites for migratory birds. Just offshore are two small islands - Pulau Satang Besar and Pulau Satang Kecil, part of the Talang-Satang National Park. Satang Besar is one of Sarawak's three "Turtle Islands" and an important conservation zone for green turtles which come ashore to lay eggs.

Tour Options & Day Trips



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Sarawak Cultural Village: "See Sarawak in Half a Day" is the claim made by Sarawak Cultural Village, a unique award-winning living museum offering an excellent introduction to local cultures and lifestyles. On a sprawling 17-acre site just a short walk from the nearby resort hotels, there are replica buildings representing every major ethnic group in Sarawak; Bidayuh, Iban and Orang Ulu longhouses, a Penan jungle settlement, a Melanau tall-house, a Malay town house with adjacent top-spinning court, a Chinese farm House and a Chinese pagoda. All the buildings are staffed with members of the various ethnic groups, in traditional costume, carrying out traditional activities. Each building has a "storyteller" who is expert in describing and interpreting traditional cultures and lifestyles. Staff will happily pose with you for photos.



After touring the village, you can enjoy a multi-cultural dance performance in the village's own theatre. There is also a good restaurant and a handicrafts shop on-site. Sarawak Cultural Village can also host theme dinners and parties (check with your hotel), and you can even get married here, in traditional Iban, Bidayuh, Malay or Orang Ulu style! Admission is RM 60 (Children age 6-12, RM 30, below 6 free.), or you can take a half-day tour from Kuching, including lunch and transport to and from your hotel organised by tour operator. Open 9 am - 5 pm daily. Dance performances at 11.30 am and 4.00 pm. Tel: 846411/846108, Fax: 846988, Email enquiry@scv.com.my for tour bookings and enquiries. www.scv.com.my.

River Cruises: See Kuching Wetlands National Park.

Satang Island - see Talang-Satang National Park.

Pulau Tokong Ara - see Talang-Satang National Park.

Irrawaddy Dolphin Watching: The Santubong area is one of the best places in Sarawak to see the rare Irrawaddy dolphin, which inhabits rivers, estuaries and shallow coastal areas. On rare occasions finless porpoises and Indo-pacific humpback dolphins are sighted in the waters off Santubong. The Santubong, Salak and Buntal river estuaries are good dolphin watching areas. The Irrawaddy is a relatively shy dolphin - it's usually hard to see so a good guide-cum-spotter is essential. CPH Travel was the first company to offer regular dolphin watching tours in the Santubong area. Their boatmen and guides are familiar with the waters around Santubong and the areas where the Irrawaddy is often seen. CPH run regular dolphin-spotting trips. Best from April to October, but also possible at other times if water conditions are right. Contact CPH at Tel: 243708. Email: cphtrvl@streamyx.com. www.cphtravel.com.my. For more information on Sarawak's Irrawaddy dolphins see http://dolphinsofsarawak.blogspot.com.



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Jungle Trekking: There are a number of jungle trekking and walking trails at Damai. The ‘Santubong Jungle Trek’ (blue trail markings) is a circular trail situated close to the hotels. The 2 km long trail takes 1-2 hours and begins at a ‘Starter Hut’ on the Santubong-Kuching Road. Pick up a trail map from hotel recreation counters. Damai Rainforest Resort also maintains a trail behind its activity centre. By far the toughest trek is the Mount Santubong Summit Trek (red trail markings) which takes 4-7 hours (up and down) depending on fitness and the route taken. Two trails lead to the summit. The ‘Main Trail’ starts near the resort hotels whilst a ‘Short Cut’ trail starts a few hundred metres past the Damai Lookout Point Seafood Restaurant on the Kuching-Santubong road. Whatever route you opt for it is essential to wear good hiking shoes and take plenty of drinking water. You can trek to the summit by yourself or go with a guide. Check with hotel recreation counters.

Malay Villages: There are a few interesting coastal villages (*kampungs*) in the Santubong Peninsula. The most accessible from Damai is **Kampung Santubong**, a well-kept Malay village at the foot of Mount Santubong. **Pasir Panjang** and **Pasir Pandak** are two beach-side kampungs which are surrounded by small rolling hills, coconut groves and durian orchards. Although Santubong is within walking distance (4 km) from Damai beach, the other villages require transport.

Buntal, a colourful Malay fishing village located off the Kuching-Santubong road approx. 25 km from Kuching, is famous for the seafood restaurants perched on wooden stilts which line the shore. Less well known is that the surrounding sand flats, mangroves, rivers and nearshore waters provide a rich habitat for a range of wildlife. Buntal is an important wintering ground for migratory bird species and the best site in the Santubong Peninsula for **bird watching**. The whole Bako-Buntal Bay is listed as an ‘Important Bird Area’ under Birdlife International’s Asia programme. The best time for bird watching is from October to March, when large numbers of migratory birds can be seen in the Buntal river estuary. These include a variety of plovers, terns, egrets, sandpipers and godwits plus some rare migrants. Resident birds often sighted include the white-bellied sea eagle, brahminy kite and collared kingfisher. The **mangroves** near Buntal support a range of **wildlife** including silver-leaf monkeys, long-tailed macaques, monitor lizards, otters, crocodiles and a diversity of birdlife. Irrawaddy dolphins are also found in waters close to the village and occasionally enter the Buntal River at high tide. **Buntal Boat Cruise** offers a range of mangrove and wildlife cruises around the Buntal area. Contact Ehwan Ibrahim on 082-846977 or 019-8785088 or pop into Ehwan’s house at No. 211, Kampung Buntal (opposite the 88 Seafood Restaurant) for more information.

Damai Golf Course: Jln Santubong, PO Box B203, 93862 Kuching. Tel: 846088, Fax: 846044. Email: dgcc@po.jaring.my. www.damaigolf.com. Arnold Palmer designed course featuring a Mountain Nine that sprawls over the foothills of Mount Santubong, and an Ocean Nine which hugs the coastline and the mangrove forests. According to Palmer, it's a "must-play course for those who love golf." Green fees RM 100 (Mon-Fri) RM160 (weekends and public holidays). Caddies RM 40. Buggies RM 58.





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Watersports: Damai Beach Resort and Damai Puri Resort & Spa offer a range of watersports including jet skiing, kayaking, sailing in catamarans, water skiing and windsurfing. Both hotels can also arrange coastal excursion trips and snorkelling and beachcombing trips. Further details and prices are available from hotel recreation counters or the Damai Beach boathouse. Permai Rainforest Resort rents sea kayaks and can arrange guided kayaking trips and coastal cruises.

Accommodation

Promotional rates are sometimes available at certain times of the year. Enquire for details.

Damai Beach Resort, Teluk Bandung Santubong, PO Box 2870, 93756 Kuching, Sarawak, Malaysia. Tel: 846999, Fax: 846777, Email: general@damaibeachresort. www.damaibeachresort.com. 224 rooms. Band D. Outlets include *Cafe Satang* (international & Malaysian cuisine), *Mango Tree Terrace* (open-air bar), *Fishermen's Catch* (seafood), *Clifftop Terrace* (snacks), *Santubong Bar* (cocktails & live music), *Treez* (casual dining). Features include Squash and Tennis Courts, Mini Golf, Kids Village, Watersports, Mountain Biking, Jungle/Mountain Trekking, 2 Swimming Pools and 1 Children's Pool, Hairdressing Salon, Manicure, Traditional Malay Massage & Reflexology, Extensive Conference & Banquet Facilities, Meeting, Seminar, Convention, Beach Wedding & Theme Party Packages, Business Facilities, Laundry & Dry Cleaning, Tour Information & Car Rental Desk, Lobby Shops, Nurse on call 24 hours, Non-Smoking Rooms, Facilities for Disabled Guests. All rooms have Air-Con, TV with In-House Movie plus local & Satellite channels, IDD telephone, coffee/tea maker, hair dryer and minibar.

Damai Puri Resort & Spa, Teluk Penyu, Santubong, PO Box 3058, 93762 Kuching, Sarawak, Malaysia. Tel: 846900, Fax: 846901, Email: reservations@damaipuriresort.com or info@damaipuriresort.com. www.damaipuriresort.com. 207 rooms. Band D. Outlets include *Elements* (international & local cuisine), *Ku* (Asian cuisine), *Gecko* (bar and snacks), *Bayu* (teas, snacks & desserts) and *Panini* (pool bar snacks and light meals). Features include Spa Village, Gym, Tennis Courts, Watersports, Kids Club, Sports and Recreation Centre, Water Sports Centre, 2 Swimming Pools, Extensive Conference & Banquet Facilities, Business Facilities, Tour Agency, Car Rental, Laundry & Dry Cleaning, Convenience Shops. All rooms have individually controlled air-con, TV with satellite channels, IDD telephone, Coffee/Tea Maker, Safe, Hair Dryer, Mini Bar.



Nanga Damai, Jalan Sultan Tengah, Santubong, Kuching, Sarawak, Malaysia. Tel: 019-8871017, 016-8871017, Fax: 414802 Email: polseb@pc.jaring.my, www.nangadamai.com. Luxury family-run homestay set in luxuriant tropical garden on the edge of the rainforest overlooking the South China Sea. Close to Cultural Village, Damai beaches, golf course and seafood restaurants. 4 double air-con rooms with phone, TV, fridge and sea & jungle views, plus 2-rooms in wooden jungle cottage. Band B. Minimum 2 nights stay. Amenities include multi-gym, bar terrace, swimming pool. Please note: Nanga Damai is not suitable for small children, family dogs are kept on the premises.

Permai Rainforest Resort, Pantai Damai, Santubong. Tel: 846487/90, Fax: 846486, Email reserve@permairainforest.com. www.permairainforest.com. Air-con Tree Houses and Cabins - Band C. Campsite - Band A. All accommodation set amongst the rainforest. Amenities include wireless internet access, restaurant, Outdoor Activity Centre, jungle pool. Can arrange nature-based tours and activities in the Damai/Santubong area.

Santubong Kuching Resort, PO Box 2364, 93748 Kuching, Sarawak, Malaysia. Tel: 846888, Fax: 846666, Email: reservation@santubongresort.com or enquiry@santubongresort.com. www.santubongresort.com. 378 rooms. Band B-C. Outlets include *Cafe Gunung Santubong* (Coffee House - International & Local Menus), *Talang Restaurant* (private bookings only), *Lobby Lounge* (Karaoke, Cocktails, Snacks), *Pool Bar* (Swim-up Bar). Features include Tennis Courts, Table Tennis, Basketball Court, Exercise Room, Kiddies Corner, Swimming Pool, Watersports (by arrangement), Board Games, Largest Conference & Banquet Facilities in Sarawak (2,000 pax theatre style seating), Laundry & Valeting, Souvenir Shop, Recreation Desk. Rooms have individually controlled Air-Con, TV, Separate Bath & Shower, IDD Telephone, Coffee/Tea Maker, Hair Dryer, Mini-bar Fridge.

Village House by Singgahsana. Tel: 846166, Fax: 846266, Email: info@villagehouse.com.my. www.villagehouse.com.my. Located in Santubong Village, approx. 100 metres from the beach. Luxury homestay (and sister property of the popular Singgahsana Lodge in Kuching) with the emphasis on chilling out. Traditional Malay-style stilted rooms set around tropical gardens and swimming pool. 2 x Rajah Rooms (air-con), 10 x Village Rooms (air-con) and 2 x House Dorms (fan, 6 pax per dorm). Other facilities include a restaurant, bar and living area with library, TV, DVD player, board games and internet terminal. Band B-C. Please note: the Village House does not accept children under 12.

Eating Out

Dining options at Damai are relatively limited. The resort hotels have a choice of restaurants, with menus ranging from spicy Malay curries and Chinese seafood to Continental cuisine and Western fast food. See accommodation fact files for full details. Perhaps the best place to eat in the Damai/Santubong area is **Buntal** village which has a host of excellent seafood restaurants overlooking the sea. There are a few more seafood restaurants dotted along the Kuching-Santubong road. Hotels can arrange transport.

Santubong Travel Connections

Santubong Village is roughly 31 km from Kuching. The Damai Beach area is 35 km. For details of bus services, see Travel Connections in the main section. The usual taxi fare from Kuching to the resorts or the Cultural Village is RM 45 (one way). From the airport to Damai is RM 62. The resort hotels have shuttle buses running to and from Kuching. Fare is RM 12 (adult), RM 6 (child) each way. Contact the hotel travel desks for the latest schedule.

NATIONAL PARKS

Entry Fees

Visitors to all national parks in Sarawak must pay an entry fee upon arrival. Entry fees and special passes are listed below. More detailed information on park fees can be found at www.sarawakforestry.com.

	Single Entry	Multiple Entry (non-transferable)		5 Entry Pass	Group Entry (5 persons per group)
		1 month	3 months		
Adult	RM 10	RM 50	RM 100	RM 40	RM 40
Student[1]/ Senior Citizen[2]/ Disabled Person	RM 5	RM 25	RM 50	RM 20	RM 20
Mixed Group[3]	-	-	-	-	RM 30
Children[4]	Free	Free	Free	Free	Free

1 A person who is studying at primary or secondary school or university. University students should produce a valid university identity card.

2 A person aged 55 and above.

3 At least one person in the group must be a student, senior citizen or disabled person.

4 6 years & below.

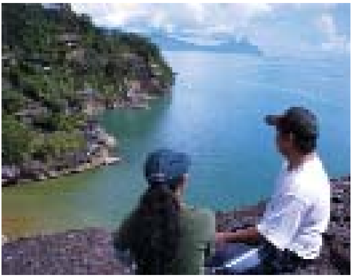
Accommodation Bookings

The National Park and Wildlife booking office (Tel: 248088, Fax: 248087) next to the Kuching Visitors' Information Centre (located in the Sarawak Tourism Complex) handles accommodation bookings for national parks in the Kuching area. An online booking service is available at www.sarawakforestry.com or http://ebooking.com.my. Day-trippers can obtain entry permits and pay fees upon arrival.



A National Park since 1957, Bako offers the perfect introduction to Sarawak's forests and wildlife. The park covers the northern tip of the Muara Tebas peninsula, an area of 27 sq km. Despite its seemingly small size, Bako contains a wide range of vegetation - swamp forest, scrub-like *padang* vegetation, mangrove forest, dipterocarp forest, delicate cliff vegetation and more. In fact, at Bako it is possible to see almost every type of vegetation found in Borneo. Bako also contains a rich variety of wildlife and a coastline covered with small bays, coves and beaches.

The park has a number of well-marked trails offering interesting walks ranging from short pleasant strolls to serious full-day hikes. Unlike some national parks, visitors to Bako are almost guaranteed to see wildlife. Long-tailed macaque monkeys and silver leaf monkeys are ever present, wild boar are often found rummaging around the park HQ, squirrels and monitor lizards are also common. There is every chance of seeing the rare and unusual proboscis monkeys on trails such as *Telok Paku* and *Telok Delima*, particularly if you go late afternoon. You are more likely to see wildlife if you quietly follow the trails and keep listening. For example, you'll probably hear the crash of vegetation before you are able to locate a proboscis monkey high up in the forest canopy.







Bako's plant life is both beautiful, and readily accessible. All the trails have a great variety of vegetation, from mighty 80-metre dipterocarps to dense mangrove forest. Carnivorous pitcher plants are found on the Lintang trail. Bako also has some good white sand beaches that provide perfect resting spots in between jungle treks. *Telok Pandan Kecil* is perhaps Bako's best beach. After an hour or so the *Telok Pandan Kecil* trail comes to a rocky headland. The view down to a beautiful secluded bay, and the thought of a swim in the cool waters, has a magical effect on tired calf muscles. The following 20 minute descent suddenly becomes more enjoyable. All of the beaches are bordered by limestone and sandstone cliffs, and the action of the sea has left some remarkable rock formations, such as the famous Sea Stack.

If you take a stroll at sunset on *Telok Assam* beach near the park HQ, you will see hundreds of swifts hovering around their nests at the rocks at the far end of the beach. Don't leave the beach after the sun disappears behind Mount Santubong. Wait another 20 minutes as the sky's colours often change dramatically, providing a colourful backdrop to the mountain.

Note: At any given time some of Bako's long distance trails are temporarily closed to trekkers. This is done for conservation reasons so that an area is left totally undisturbed for a fixed period of time. Please check with the National Parks & Wildlife booking office if you wish to know which particular trails are closed.

Accommodation: Be careful of the monkeys - they are compulsive thieves. Bako is very popular, especially at weekends, so it is advisable to book accommodation well in advance. Prices shown exclude 5% government service tax. All rooms have fans. Accommodation consists of 'Type 5' Forest Lodges (2 rooms with 3 single beds each, shared bathroom) at RM 150 per house or RM 100 per room; 'Type 6' Forest Lodges (2 rooms with 2 single beds each, attached bathroom) at RM 75 per house or RM 50 per room, and Hostel Rooms (4 beds) at RM 40 per room or RM 15 per person. The Campsite is RM 5 per person.

The Park HQ: Upon arrival visitors must register at the Park HQ. There is an information centre, canteen and shop at the Park HQ. The information centre shows films and slide shows on Bako's wildlife, and has full details of all the trails and what to look out for. The canteen serves a range of hot and cold drinks, snacks and light meals (fried rice, noodles etc.).

Getting There: Petra Jaya bus No.6 and regular minibuses (see Travel Connections) go to Kampung Bako, a picturesque fishing village. Taxi fare is RM 35 one-way. From there you have to charter a boat to the Park HQ from the main jetty. The one-way fare is RM 47 per boat (up to 5 people). The boat ride is an adventure in itself, with the skilled and experienced boatmen riding the surf at high speed, to the delight of most visitors. For many people, this is where Borneo really starts! If you have to wait at Kampung Bako for a bus, or for the tide to rise, there is a good seafood restaurant near the old jetty that also serves snacks and drinks.

For a visual introduction to Bako see Travelcom Asia's video "Discovering Bako National Park' available at www.youtube.com/profile?user=pesut



Gunung Gading is home to the world's largest flower, the *rafflesia*, which can grow up to one metre in diameter. When in bloom the flower gives off a nasty smell which attracts flies and other insects. The rafflesia has no specific season, taking nine months to mature and flowering for only 4 or 5 days before dying.

Gunung Gading was only opened to the public in mid-1994, after extensive environmental impact studies. Previously it was used solely as a conservation zone for the rafflesia. The emphasis is still on conservation, and the National Parks agency have taken measures to allow visitors to view flowering rafflesia without damaging young rafflesia buds and other plants. There is a plankwalk close to where rafflesia are commonly found, and if a plant is flowering deeper in the forest, the park rangers may be able to take you on a guided walk to the site. Please take care; the small brown buds that you see on the forest floor may be rafflesia, so tread carefully and follow the park ranger's instructions. Guiding fees are RM 20 per hour (per group).

Owing to the rafflesia's rarity and brief flowering period, timing (and luck) are important. The park staff usually know when a plant is about to bloom. Visitors can check with the park HQ (Tel: 735144) or the National Parks and Wildlife Booking Office in Kuching (Tel: 248088) to find out if any plants are about to bloom or already in bloom. Although flowers generally bloom throughout the year, November, December and January can be regarded as the peak flowering season as the frequency of blooms is high.



Seeing a blooming rafflesia is certainly the highlight of a trip to Gunung Gading, but the Park and the whole Lundu area are well worth visiting anyway. The rugged mountain peaks that make up the Park provide a scenic backdrop to the nearby town of Lundu, and the nearby beaches at Pandan and Siar. Gunung Gading also has some enjoyable walks and a challenging jungle trek.

The Waterfall trail offers the shortest walk, winding its way up through the forest past a series of waterfalls. It takes about one hour to reach the last one, Waterfall No. 7. You'll need to be fit for the other trek, the *Gunung Gading Summit* trail (3-4 hours, one way) as it involves some serious hill walking. You must complete the trail and return the same day, as overnight stays in the forest are not permitted. From the summit you can opt for a side trek to *Batu Bakubu*, which was a former communist camp during the insurgency. Further information about these treks can be obtained from the Park HQ.

Accommodation: The HQ is fairly small and consists of an information centre, toilet blocks and accommodation facilities. There are two 'Type 5' Forest Lodges (3-bedroom chalets, up to 6 people) at RM 150. A hostel is also available (RM 15 per person, RM 40 per room). The Campsite is RM 5 per person. There is no canteen at the park HQ. Overnight visitors can either head into Lundu for food or bring their own provisions.

Getting There: Gunung Gading is 5 minutes drive from the small town of Lundu in Southwest Sarawak. Kuching-based travel agents can arrange tours. Independent travellers should take STC Bus No. EP07 from Kuching's regional express bus terminal to Lundu town centre. From there, take a taxi or white *bas sewa* to the park HQ.

Lundu Town

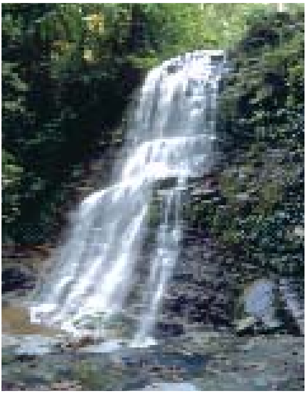

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Lundu is a sleepy up-country town comprising a few rows of shophouses, a small market, government buildings and some attractive kampong houses, inhabited by very friendly residents. The town is a good base to explore the area if the national park accommodation is full. In addition to Gunung Gading there are some attractive beaches nearby, including Siar and Pandan. There are some beach huts and chalets at Pandan beach, but they are overpriced for the basic facilities they offer so staying in town or at the Park HQ is more convenient and better value. Lundu has two budget hotels, a few food stalls and restaurants, and regular bus departures to Kuching and Sematan.

Lundu Gading Hotel. Lot 174, Lundu Town District. Tel: 735199, Fax: 735299. RM 58 (a/c, attached bathroom and TV).
Cheng Hak Boarding House. Basic rooms with shared bathroom. Contact Goh Joo Hak store at No. 51 Bazaar (near the Lundu Gading Hotel). Tel: 735018. RM 25 (fan) and RM 35 (a/c).
Union Yes Retreat, Siar Beach. The best hotel accommodation in the Lundu area. Choice of hostel rooms (RM 100-195), hotel rooms (RM 130-275), apartment style units (RM 260-400) and chalets (RM 180-258). Tel: 453027. Email headoffice@sbeu.org.my.



Kubah National Park is an easy and enjoyable day trip from Kuching. Situated on a small sandstone plateau, this small park (2,230 ha.) boasts crystal clear streams and a host of small waterfalls and bathing pools. Kubah is mostly covered by mixed dipterocarp forest, but it also has one of the widest selections of palms and orchids in Borneo. The varied wildlife includes bearded pig, mouse deer, black hornbill and many species of amphibians and reptiles. However, Kubah's wildlife tends to stay deep in the forest so it is not really a park for "wildlife encounters" (Bako is unbeatable in that respect). Kubah's appeal lies in its rainforest scenery, its waterfalls, streams and bathing pools and the 93 species of palm found within its boundaries.



© *Travelcom Asia*

The park has six jungle trails and a path that leads to the summit of Gunung Serapi (5-6 hours return trip). Wooden shelters are located along the various trails. The *Main Trail* passes through dipterocarp forest and links the various trails of the park. The *Palmetum* is the park's showcase trail, passing through an area rich in palms. The *Selang Trail* leads to a view point about 45 minutes walk from the HQ. After about 30 minutes you come to a very steep section where ropes are provided to help with the climb. At the end of the trail you'll find a raised wooden platform complete with a bench chair and some superb views of Matang and the Santubong peninsula. The *Waterfall Trail* is the most popular trail in the park. It passes through mixed dipterocarp forest and incorporates a number of plankwalk sections that cross streams and swampy land. From the HQ, it takes about 1 hr 30 mins to reach the waterfall.

The *Rayu Trail* leads from the park HQ to the Matang Wildlife Centre (see below) and takes about 3-4 hours (one way). First follow the main trail before turning right to begin a relatively easy descent through the rainforest. Mid-way along the trail you'll find some rainforest giants, and pass numerous Bintangor trees which are currently the subject of Aids research. At the end of the trail you enter a swampy section (watch out for leeches) before coming to a crystal clear stream and the riverside picnic areas at the Wildlife Centre. Note that you can also start both the *Waterfall* and *Rayu* trails just past the 900 feet point on the Mount Serapi path. The trek from the road to the waterfall takes about 45 minutes and begins with a steep descent on a wooden staircase that winds its way down the forested slopes. The new *Belian Trail* is about 1 hour's easy walking and as well as huge *Belian* (Borneo ironwood) trees, there is a wide variety of other plant life. Colourful forest birds including the maroon woodpecker, white rumped shama, chestnut-naped forktail, and rufous-collared kingfisher are often heard and seen, and giant squirrels are frequently spotted jumping from tree to tree.

MATANG WILDLIFE CENTRE

Matang Wildlife Centre, part of Kubah National Park, houses endangered wildlife in large enclosed areas of rainforest or spacious cages. The main attraction is the orang utan training programme, where young orang utans, who were either orphaned or rescued from captivity, are taught how to survive in the wild. The best time to see the orang utans is at feeding time (see below). As well as orang utans, the centre includes spacious enclosures housing sambar deer, crocodiles, sun bears, civets and bear cats, and three large aviaries featuring hornbills, eagles, kites, storks and a host of other birds native to Sarawak.

There are some pleasant riverside picnic spots a short walk from the information centre and four jungle trails. The *Pitcher Trail*, which follows a circular path through the forest, takes approximately two hours and trekkers should not have too much difficulty in spotting the various specious of pitcher plants that litter the forest floor at the sides of the trail. The *Rayu Trail* leads to the Kubah Park headquarters and takes 3-4 hours. The *Sungai Buluh Trail* leads to two secluded waterfalls and takes 2-hours (one way).

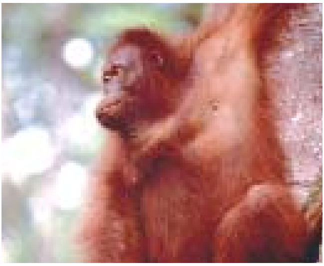


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There is an information centre, accommodation facilities and a small canteen just a short walk from the car park.

Animal Feeding Times

Morning : 9.00 - 10.00 am
Afternoons : 3.00 - 4.00 pm



Animal enclosure opening hours

9.30 - 11.30 am
2.00 - 3.30 pm

Accommodation Facilities

Kubah Park HQ: 'Type 4' Forest Lodge, RM 225 per house (kitchen, 2 bedrooms (6 beds), air-con, TV, hot water and verandah). 'Type 5' Forest Lodge, RM 150 per house (3 bedrooms (10 beds), fan and common cooking facilities). Hostel, RM 15 per person.
Matang Wildlife Centre: 'Type 5' Forest Lodge (2-bedrooms, each with double bed) RM 150 per house. Hostel, RM 15 per person or RM 40 per room (4 beds), Campsite RM 5 per person.

Getting There

Kubah is only 21 km from Kuching, whilst Matang Wildlife Centre is 35 km from town. Local tour operators run day trips to both the National Park and the Wildlife Centre. There is no regular bus service to the Centre. Local mini-buses serve the villages in the Matang area but the service is irregular. These mini buses depart from the alleyway near the Saujana car park (See **Travel Connections**).



Located just 15 km from Kuching and approximately 5 km from Damai Beach, the Kuching Wetlands National Park covers an area of 6,610 hectares on the estuarine reaches of the Sibu Laut and Salak rivers. The park is mostly comprised of a saline mangrove system that includes an extensive network of marine waterways and tidal creeks interconnecting the two major rivers that form the boundaries of the park. Small patches of heath forest are found in the interior of the park.

The park is an important spawning and nursery ground for fish and prawn species and contains a wide diversity of wildlife, including proboscis monkeys, long tailed macaque monkeys, silver-leaf monkeys, monitor lizards, estuarine crocodiles and a range of birdlife, including kingfishers, white-bellied sea eagles and shore birds, including the rare lesser adjutant stork.

Gazetted as a national park in July 2002, the site is one of the last remnants of the formerly extensive Sarawak Mangrove Forest Reserve, which previously covered approximately 17,000 hectares and was first protected in 1924. Recognising the ecological significance and tourism potential of the area, the Sarawak State Government is currently formulating a management plan for Kuching Wetlands. In November 2005 Malaysia designated the park as a Ramsar site, a wetland of international importance.



Whilst the park is relatively new, the area has long attracted nature enthusiasts owing to its fascinating ecosystem and excellent wildlife viewing opportunities. For the visitor, Kuching Wetlands offers an excellent introduction to the mangrove environment, and a chance to see a range of wildlife and spend some time soaking up the sights and sounds of one of the most interesting stretches of coastline in the whole of Sarawak.

River Cruises

To explore the park you have to take to the river. A number of tour operators offer coastal and river cruises in and around the park. These cruises follow the main waterways of the park with most trips taking up half a day. Tours usually meander up the Salak River before entering the smaller rivers and creeks in the park. Some tours stop at the Malay fishing village on Salak Island, which lies just outside the park's boundary. Contact hotel recreation counters or tour operators for details.

The Santubong Wildlife Cruise

This award-winning tour is run by CPH Travel and is one of the best wildlife watching tours in Sarawak. The tour departs from the Santubong Boat Club between 4 and 5 pm (depending on tide and weather) and returns around 7.30 pm. After departing the boat club you head to the Santubong and Salak river estuaries (just outside the park boundary) to search for Irrawaddy dolphins. Small groups of dolphins often feed at these river mouths and occasionally enter the Salak River itself. After searching for dolphins, your boat then enters the park proper, navigating the smaller rivers channels. Along the way you'll get a chance to experience the mangroves and go in search of the park's wildlife, including proboscis monkeys. As darkness descends your boat makes its way to sites where fireflies and crocodiles are commonly seen. Flashlights are used to locate the 'eye shine' from the crocodiles. Bookings are essential - contact CPH Travel at Tel: 243708. Email: cphtrvl@streamyx.com. www.cphtravel.com.my.

Getting There

The park is located within an hour's journey time from Kuching. From Damai Beach it's just a 20-30 minute boat ride away. Whilst boat access to the park is possible from Telaga Air and Samariang, most tour operators use the more convenient jumping-off points at Damai Beach or Santubong. Tour packages usually include transfers from your hotel in Kuching or Damai to the boat jetty departure point. Contact hotel recreation counters or tour operators for details.



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Sarawak's first marine protected area, Talang-Satang National Park covers an area of 19,414 hectares and was gazetted in 1999 to enhance marine turtle conservation in Sarawak. The park encompasses the coastline and waters surrounding four islands; Pulau Talang-Talang Besar and Pulau Talang-Talang Kecil (located off Sematan), and Pulau Satang Besar and Pulau Satang Kecil (located off Santubong). These small islands are surrounding by patches of shallow coral reef which provide shelter and resting grounds for sea turtles that come ashore to lay their eggs. Three of the islands in the park - Talang Talang Besar, Talang Talang Kecil and Satang Besar - are known as Sarawak's "Turtle Islands."

Adult female turtles return to the beach where they were born to lay their eggs, often travelling thousands of kilometres. Whilst four species of marine turtles are known to nest in Sarawak, the Green Turtle accounts for 90% of the turtle landings recorded. The park's Turtle Islands account for 95% of all recorded turtle landings in Sarawak, a clear indicator of the importance of Talang-Satang for marine turtle conservation.

Marine turtles face a number of threats including entanglement in fishing nets, habitat destruction, water pollution, collection of eggs, boat strikes, predation of eggs and hatchlings by birds, monitor lizards, civet cats and other wild and domestic animals, poaching for meat or shells, and ingestion of marine debris such as plastic bags. Owing to these threats the state government carries out turtle conservation programmes in the park.

This conservation work dates back to the 1940's when the Sarawak Museum embarked on a long-term research project. Thanks to the Museum's pioneering work, records of landings date back to 1946. Large scale turtle conservation work began in 1951 when over 20,000 eggs where collected and transferred to a natural beach hatchery. In 1953 the first tagging of Green turtles was done.

Today, Sarawak Forestry manages the national park and has set up a number of hatcheries. During the peak turtle nesting season (May - September), park wardens monitor the beaches for turtle landings, remove eggs from the nests and place them in the hatcheries. After 40 to 60 days incubation, the young hatchlings are released and scamper across the beach to the sea.

The Talang-Satang National Park also includes the Pulau Tukong Ara-Banun Wildlife Sanctuary, two small islets located close to the Satang Islands. **Pulau Tokong Ara**, the larger of the two rocky outcrops, is home to breeding colonies of bridled terns and black-naped terns. Black coloured pacific reef egrets are also frequently sighted on the rock. Tokong Ara is best seen as part of a wider coastal tour of the Santubong area.

Visiting Pulau Satang Besar

Pulau Satang Besar, the largest of the park's islands, is open to visitors and accessible by boat from Santubong or Damai Beach. Standard national park fees apply and tickets can be purchased on the island. There is a small information centre near the beach and visitors can also view the turtle hatchery. The beach on Satang is one of the best in Sarawak and it is possible to snorkel on the nearby reef if there is good visibility. Visitors can stay overnight on Satang Island in privately owned chalets. Facilities are very basic, but you won't spend much time in your room as you'll be on the beach waiting for turtles to land. CPH Travel (Tel: 243708. Email: cphtrvl@streamyx.com) run overnight trips to Satang during the nesting season and day trips to Satang can be combined with their other boat tours such as dolphin watching and the Santubong Wildlife Cruise (see **Damai & Santubong** Section)

Visiting Pulau Talang Besar



© Sarawak Forestry

Turtles take priority over tourists at Pulau Talang Besar so access to the island is restricted to researchers and national park staff. However, you can visit the island as a volunteer on Sarawak Forestry's **Sea Turtle Adoption Programme**. This allows volunteers to spend 4 days learning more about turtles and taking part in a range of activities including: beach patrols to locate turtle landings; monitoring of nesting activities; tagging and measuring turtles; transferring eggs to the hatchery; releasing hatchlings and data recording.



© Sarawak Forestry

The volunteer programme is open from May to September and costs RM 600 for Malaysians and RM 1,200 for non-Malaysians. The price includes accommodation and turtle/nest adoption fees but excludes park guide fees, meals, transportfrom Kuching, ground handling fees and insurance. The total package price depends on the number of people in your group and is likely to be around RM 2,500 per person.

For further information contact Kuching-base tour operators or Sarawak Forestry. Tel: 348001. Email: info@sarawakforestry.com. http://seaturtle.sarawakforest.com.

SEMENGGOH NATURE RESERVE



For over 20 years, the wardens here trained young orang utans, who had been orphaned or rescued from captivity, how to survive in the wild. The success of this programme has left the surrounding forest reserve with a thriving population of healthy adolescent and young adult orang utans, who are now breeding in the wild. The programme has been transferred to Matang Wildlife Centre, but Semenggoh is still home to its successful graduates, semi-wild orang utans and their babies. They spend most of their time roaming the forest but frequently come back to the Centre for a free meal. If it is the fruiting season in the forest, some or even all of them may not come to feed. This in itself is a good sign and another step on the way to full rehabilitation. The entrance fee for Semenggoh is RM 3 (adult) and RM 1.50 (child). Opening hours are 8 am to 12 pm and 2 pm to 4.15 pm. Feeding times are 9 to 10 am, 3 pm to 4 pm (approx.). Tour operators arrange trips here, or STC bus No. 6 stops outside the gate. RM 4 one-way. It's a 20-minute walk from the main entrance to the feeding area.

AROUND KUCHING & SOUTHWEST SARAWAK

There are a number of **Homestay Programmes** at various locations within 2 hours of Kuching that offer visitors the opportunity of staying with local communities and enjoying local attractions. Guests stay with their host family, eat home-cooked meals and can participate in daily village activities and excursions to nearby attractions. For further information and a list of participating communities visit the Sarawak Homestay website at http://www.right.sarawak.gov.my/Homestay. One of the longest established homestay projects is located at **Telok Melano**. This picturesque Malay fishing village is situated at the western tip of Sarawak, about an hour's boat ride from Sematan. The homestay programme offers visitors the chance to experience village life and enjoy the many natural attractions of the area. Activities include snorkelling, diving, fishing, jungle trekking and trips to nearby Tanjung Datu National Park.

Jong's Crocodile Farm and mini-zoo is located 29 km from Kuching, just off the Serian road. Open daily from 9 am to 5 pm. Feeding times are 11 am and 3 pm approximately. Sarawakians RM 10 (adult), RM 5 (child), other visitors RM 16 (adult), RM 8 (child). Take STC bus No. 3A to Siburan village. Tel: 863570.



Padawan Pitcher Plant and Orchid Garden showcases lowland pitcher plants and orchids from around Borneo. Open from 9 am to 4pm, Tuesdays to Sundays. Entrance fee: foreign visitors RM 10 (adult or child), Malaysians RM 2 (adults) and RM 1 (children). Located on the way to Semenggoh at Kota Padawan, 10th Mile Penrissen Road. When you reach the Bazaar, follow the signposts. Tel: 615566 for further details.

Serian: A small market town about 1 hour from Kuching. Tour groups heading for the Skrang, Lemanak and Batang Ai areas often stop here. The main attraction is an excellent farmers' market selling all manner of fruit, vegetables and forest produce, and a thriving fish market. If you are lucky you will also see sago worms, a favourite local delicacy, offered for sale. The Serian District Council has a number of chalets at nearby Ranchan Pools, a local beauty spot. Chalets RM 50-100, Dormitory RM 100 (10 beds). Tel: 876681 Fax: 874799.

Bau: A 19th century gold rush put Bau on the map. Small-scale mining continues, but nowadays Bau is a market town and administrative centre, about 60 km from Kuching. There are some interesting caves around Bau. The **Wind Cave** - a collection of small passageways - is a popular local picnic spot. The **Fairy Cave** is larger and more impressive - there is a small Chinese shrine in the main chamber and varied vegetation at the entrance. A flashlight is essential to explore the rock formations within. Travel agents can arrange trips, or there are frequent buses to Bau. From the town, take a taxi or hitch-hike (usually quite easy). The Bau area, with its jungle streams and interesting limestone scenery, is a great location for kayaking and caving. Kuching Kayak (www.kuchingkayak.com) offers a number of kayaking tours and Kuching Caving (www.kuchingcaving.com) offer various caving trips in the Bau District (see **Sports & Recreation** section for further details).

If you are in Sarawak during June, it is well worth travelling to the Bau area to witness **Gawai Padi** (or Gawai Sawa'a), the culmination of a remarkable shamanistic ritual where the Bidayuh community give thanks to the Rice Goddess for an abundant harvest. Each village has its own ritual, complete with shamen, priestesses, trance dancers, musicians, and of course an all-night street party. Contact community insider Mr. Diweng Bakir, Tel: 019-8565498, Email: diweng_bakir@yahoo.com, for further details.



Borneo Highlands Resort & Hornbill Golf & Jungle Club: Located 70km from Kuching, this hill resort is situated at the Sarawak-Kalimantan border, at an altitude of 600 to 1,000 metres. The challenging 18-hole golf course winds its way around the natural features of the highland plateau whilst the Jungle Spa offers herbal treatments and traditional massages. The resort's Clubhouse offers 30 rooms and suites. Tel: 577930 or 573980. Fax: 576680. Email: enquiry@borneohighlands.com.my. Visit www.borneohighlands.com.my for further details of golf and spa packages.

Lundu (see Gunung Gading Section)

Sematan is a picturesque fishing port located about approximately 110 km from Kuching. The long stretch of beach north of the town is a popular weekend getaway and picnic spot for residents of Kuching. Owing to the low sloping sand you have to walk out a fair distance if you want a swim. There are several chalet developments at Sematan beach, and the pick of the bunch is **Sematan Palm Beach Resort**. Rates from RM 153-390, incl. breakfast & dinner. Call 712388 for further details.

Matang Family Park: A popular recreation and picnic spot situated at the foothills of Mount Serapi about 25 km from Kuching. There are picnic areas, a children's playground, jungle tracks and a crystal clear mountain stream which is ideal for swimming. Entrance fee RM 3 (adult), RM 2 (teenagers) and RM 1 (child). There is no bus service from Kuching. Local mini-buses (*bas sewa*) depart from the alleyway next to the Saujana car park.

Kampung Panchor Dayak Hot Springs is accessed from the Kuching-Serian Road, just after the small town of Tapah, via a rural road and gravel track. Around 48 km from Kuching, the spring is managed by the local community who have developed basic infrastructure including boardwalks and changing rooms. Open at weekends, admission is RM 3 for adults and free for children.





It is almost a crime to come to Sarawak without visiting an Iban longhouse. Iban hospitality is legendary, and visitors are guaranteed a good time. A longhouse is basically a terraced street of separate dwellings covered by one roof, under the authority of a headman, or *tuai rumah*. Each family lives in its separate apartment, or *bilik*, and communal activities take place outside on the verandah, or *ruai*. This is also where single male visitors spend the night. Female visitors and couples will be invited to stay inside the *bilik* with the family.



Most longhouses are busy, modern farming communities, and people wear practical clothes like jeans and T-shirts when they are at work. Traditional costumes and head-dresses are usually only worn for special festivals like *gawai dayak* (the Iban harvest festival, 1st June), *gawai antu* (the ancestor festival, very rare) and weddings. If you want to see traditional rituals, customs and dances, then unless you are very lucky it is best to go with an organised tour group.

Tour groups are usually greeted with a glass of *tuak* (rice wine) and a welcome dance. They are then shown around and treated to various cultural performances, including dancing and drumming. You will usually be invited to attempt the *ngajat* dance. Do not try to refuse as guests are expected to contribute to the entertainment just like the hosts. If you know any dances, folk songs or poems from your own country, you will make some lifelong friends, no matter how badly you perform. Normally you will be able to stay in the longhouse overnight, but if you prefer some privacy, many tour operators have their own guest houses near the longhouse.





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The majority of longhouses that accept guests are in the Skrang, Lemanak, Batang Ai and Rejang River areas. These all involve at least one overnight stop and a longboat trip on the river, but some longhouse safaris can last for a week or more. The Visitors' Information Centre in Kuching has a list of approved tour operators. If you are short of time, there are also a number of Bidayuh longhouses near Kuching that can be visited as a day trip.

Note: Visitors are very welcome at most longhouses, but only if they are expected. If you receive an invitation to a longhouse (quite common when travelling upriver), take up the offer - you are sure to have an interesting and enjoyable trip. If you do not have an invitation it is best to go with a tour group, as you will not only be expected but warmly welcomed.

Hilton Batang Ai Longhouse Resort, situated on the banks of the Batang Ai Hydro Lake near Lubok Antu, is roughly 4 hours from Kuching on the fringes of Batang Ai National Park, and provides jungle adventures with all the usual Hilton comforts. The resort offers visits to some of the most traditional Iban longhouses in Sarawak, jungle treks, and boating and fishing in the lake and its tributaries, etc. Tel: 083-584388, Fax: 083-584399, or contact the reservations office in Hilton Kuching, 082-248200. 100 rooms built in traditional longhouse style. Band C-D. Includes restaurant, bar/lounge, pool table, swimming pool and conference facilities. All rooms fully equipped with a/c, IDD phone, hot & cold water and satellite TV.





HOTELS (city centre only)

1	360 Hotel	14	Fata Hotel
2	Arif Hotel	15	Harbour View Hotel
3	B&B Inn	16	Hilton Kuching
4	Borneo Hotel	17	Hotel Grand Continental
5	Budget Hotels (Jln Green Hill)	18	Hotel Grand Margherita
6	Central Inn	19	Hua Kuok Inn
7	Chung Hin Hotel	20	Kapit Hotel
8	City Inn	21	Kingwood Inn
9	Carpenter Guesthouse	22	Kuching Park Hotel
10	Dormani Hotel	23	Laila Inn
11	Diocesan Guest House	24	Liwah Hotel
12	Empire Inn	25	Longhouse Hotel
13	Fairview	26	Merdeka Palace Hotel & Suites



HOTELS (city centre only)

27 Motel Siangolila
28 Regal Court
29 Riverside Majestic
30 Rom Orchid Garden Homestay
31 Singgahsana Lodge
32 Somerset Gateway Kuching
33 Supreme Hotel
34 Tai Pan Hotel
35 Telang Usan Hotel
36 Thompson Inn
37 Tune Hotel
38 Wesberly Apartments

INFORMATION

Police Station
Tourist Police
1 Malaysian Airlines (MAS)
2 Air Asia
Sarawak Transport Company
Petra Jaya Transport (for Bako)
Visitors' Information Centre & National Parks Office
Sarawak Tourism Federation
Tourism Malaysia Office
Banks & Money Changers


KUCHING AREA MAP
South China Sea
Sarawak, Malaysia
Kalimantan, Indonesia
KUCHING
Tanjung Datu NP
Telok Melano
P. Talang-Talang Besar
P. Talang-Talang Kecil
Kg. Pueh
Sematan
Pandan Beach
Gunung Gading NP
Lundu
Sampadi
Matang Wildlife Centre
Kubah NP
P. Satang Besar
P. Satang Kecil
Sarawak Cultural Village
Damai Beach
Santubong
Telaga Air
Kuching Wetlands NP
Kg Buntal
(Seafood Restaurants)
Bako NP
Kg.Bako
Muara Tebas
Asajaya
Kota Samarahan
P. Burung
Batang Sadong
Sebuyau
Maludam
Batang Lupar
Simunjan
Kota Padawan
Siburan
Jong's Crocodile Farm
Semengoh Nature Reserve
Bau
Fairy Cave/ Wind Cave
Kg. Stass
Serikin
Kg. Benuk
Serian
Ranchan Pools
Borneo Highlands
Anna Rais Longhouse
Tebedu (Border Crossing)
To Pontianak (Indonesia)
To Sri Aman, Batang Ai, Skrang & Lemanak
Not to scale

Miri and Northeast Sarawak

Miri, a bustling oil town and commercial centre, is the main town and gateway of Northeast Sarawak, home to some of the state's most interesting attractions. Miri is linked by air and road to all of Sarawak's major towns and to Brunei. The town has a wide range of accommodation catering to all budgets, and dozens of good restaurants, pubs and bars. The main reason for coming here is to visit the national parks, including spectacular **Gunung Mulu** with its world-famous cave system, **Niah Caves** with its burial grounds and cave paintings, **Lambir Hills**, the world's most diverse rainforest, and **Loagan Bunut**, Sarawak's largest natural lake.



There are also excellent opportunities to visit Iban and Orang Ulu longhouses on the Baram river and its tributaries. A little-discovered destination accessible from Miri is **Bario** and the **Kelabit Highlands**, a beautiful and remote mountain valley with superb jungle treks and welcoming Kelabit longhouses.

Sibu and the Rejang River



The Rejang is Malaysia's greatest river, 350 miles (560 km) long and draining a vast rain forest catchment area. It is also the only means of access to for thousands of longhouses and villages along the river and its many tributaries. In fact many experienced travellers believe that a journey up the Rejang is one of the world's last great travel adventures. **Sibu** is the gateway to the Rejang and the second largest town in Sarawak. It is a bustling modern town and the main port of the Rejang basin. Sibu has a number of good hotels and a wide range of budget accommodation, as well as restaurants, pubs, and karaoke lounges. It is the main jumping off point for embarking on a Rejang river journey and visiting longhouse communities along the way. The banks of the Rejang are dotted with longhouses. On the lower reaches as far as the small town of Kapit, and along the Baleh tributary, the people are usually Iban. Above the Pelagus rapids, one hour upriver from **Kapit**, members of the various Orang Ulu groups have settled, and the banks are guarded with Klirieng, wooden burial poles. Usually the journey finishes at **Belaga**, a small bazaar town dominated by the Kayan and the Kenyah peoples, where nomadic Penan sometimes come to trade their jungle produce.

For more detailed information on the above destinations see the Sarawak Tourism Board's guides to 'Sibu & Central Sarawak' and 'Miri & Northern Sarawak'.

Please Note: If you are calling from outside Kuching, the telephone area code is **082** and the country prefix is **60**.

The **Sarawak Tourism Board** (STB) offers a range of services to provide visitors and the travel industry with up-to-date travel information about Sarawak. STB's visitors' information centres in Kuching, Miri and Sibu stock a wide range of guidebooks, maps, brochures and leaflets. The helpful staff can also assist with detailed travel enquires and national park accommodation bookings.

The **Kuching Visitors' Information Centre** is located in the Sarawak Tourism Complex (Old Court House). Tel: 410944/410942 Fax: 256301. Email: vic-kuching@sarawaktourism.com

Opening hours

Monday-Friday	0800 hrs - 1800 hrs
Saturday, Sunday & Public Holidays	0900 hrs - 1500 hrs

The Sarawak Tourism Complex also houses the **National Park and Wildlife Booking Office** (Tel: 248088, Fax: 248087) where you can obtain visitor permits and book accommodation for Bako, Gunung Gading, Kubah and Matang Wildlife Centre. Open 0800 hrs - 1700 hrs (Monday - Friday only)

Miri Visitors' Information Centre

Lot 31, Jln Malayu, 98000 Miri.
Tel: 085-434181, Fax: 085-434179. Email: vic-miri@sarawaktourism.com
Opening hours: Same as Kuching above.

Sibu Visitors' Information Centre

Ground Floor, 32 Jln Lintang, 96000 Sibu.
Tel: 084-340980, Fax: 084-341280. Email: vic-sibu@sarawaktourism.com
Opening hours: Monday - Friday 0800 hrs - 1700 hrs.
Closed Sat, Sun and Public Holidays

STB's Kuching Head Office provides comprehensive media and travel industry liaison services, up-to-date information on tourism policy and planning in Sarawak, and replies to written or email enquiries.

Sarawak Tourism Board
P.O. Box 2950, 93758 Kuching, Sarawak, Malaysia.
Tel: 423600 Fax: 416700 Email: stb@sarawaktourism.com
www.sarawaktourism.com

The **Sarawak Tourism Federation** information centre is situated on the waterfront next to the Sarawak Steamship Building, and can supply information on accommodation, bus routes, hotels, approved travel agents etc. Tel: 240620 Fax: 427151.

Opening hours

Monday-Thursday	0800 hrs - 1245 hrs, 1400 hrs - 1615 hrs
Friday	0800 hrs - 1130 hrs, 1430 hrs - 1645 hrs
Saturday	0800 hrs - 1245 hrs

The **Tourism Malaysia** office, on the Mezzanine Floor of Riverbank Suites, has information on Sarawak, the rest of Malaysia and a good stock of Tourism Malaysia's colourful and informative brochures. Tel: 246775/246575. Fax: 246442. Email: mtpbkch@tourism.gov.my.

Opening hours
Monday - Friday 0800 hrs - 1700 hrs
Closed Sat, Sun and Public Holidays

AIR - Malaysia: Regular **MAS** flights connect Kuching with Johor Bahru, Kota Kinabalu, Kuala Lumpur, Miri and Sibu. Malaysia's budget airline, **Air Asia** operates frequent flights to Kuching from Kuala Lumpur, Johor Bahru, Kota Kinabalu, Penang Miri, Bintulu and Sibu. **MAS Wings** operates the **Rural Air Service**, flying Twin Otters (baggage allowance 10kg) & Fokker 50s to 40 destinations across East Malaysia.

AIR - International: MAS operates a twice daily Kuching-Singapore service, whilst **Silk Air, Air Asia, Jetstar Asia** and **Tiger Airways** all offer daily flights. **Royal Brunei** flies to Kuching from Bandar Sri Begawan 3x weekly, **Air Asia flies** to Macau (China) 3x weekly, and **Batavia Air** flies 3x weekly to Jakarta via Pontianak. Connections to other destinations are via Kuala Lumpur, Kota Kinabalu, or Singapore.

Check airline websites for ticket prices and the latest deals.

Airport departure tax is RM 6 (domestic), RM 20 (Within ASEAN) and RM 45 (international). Airlines may levy **fuel and insurance surcharges** which vary based on the sector; contact them for the latest fees.

Airport Information. Tel: 457373/454242.
Air Asia. Wisma Ho Ho Lim, Ground Floor, No. 291 Sub Lot 4, Jln Abell. Tel: 283222 Call Centre: 03-76512222. Online booking & enquiries: www.airasia.com.
Batavia Air. Level 2, Kuching International Airport. Tel: 626299 Fax: 629166. Online booking & enquiries: www.batavia-air.co.id.
Jetstar Asia. Level 2, Kuching International Airport. Call centre: 1800 81 3090. Online booking & enquiries: www.jetstar.com
Malaysian Airlines System (MAS) and **MAS Wings** - Lot 215, Jln Song Thian Cheok. Tel: 1-300-88-3000. Fax: 411767. Online booking & enquiries: www.malaysiaairlines.com.
Royal Brunei. Level 2, Kuching International Airport. Tel: 453422/456422 Fax: 457422. Online booking & enquiries: www.bruneiair.com.
Silk Air. Call centre: Tel: +65 62238888 (Singapore). Online booking & enquiries: www.silkair.com.
Tiger Airways. Call centre: Tel: +65 65807630 (Singapore). Online booking & enquiries: www.tigerairways.com.

ROAD: The Trans-Borneo highway connects Kuching to all major cites in Sarawak. Kuching to Sibu takes about 5 hours by car. Roads in and around Kuching are generally good.

BUS SERVICES: **Sarawak Transport Company's** (STC) (Tel: 451573/242579) green and yellow buses serve the Kuching area and south-west Sarawak. **Chin Lian Long's** (Tel: 422767) blue and white buses serve the city and its suburbs. Major bus stops at Jln Mosque and the Post Office. **Petra Jaya City Bus** (Tel: 429418) serve Bako, Buntal and Kota Samarahan. Their white and yellow buses depart from the open air market near Electra House. **Bau Transport Company** (Tel: 763160) buses depart from the near the Saujana Car Park for Bau Town. Long distance buses depart from the **Regional Express Bus Terminal** on Jln Penrissen. The most convenient place in the town centre to buy tickets is the **Biaramas Express** booking office (Tel: 429418) on Jln Khoo Hun Yeang (near Electra House). Biaramas also have an office at the terminal (Tel: 456999, open from 6 am to 10 pm) and post their latest bus schedules on www.busasia.net. Other long distance bus companies include **Vital Focus Transportation** (Tel: 453190 or 461277. www.vftransportation.com.my) which operates the **PB Express, Suria Bus**

Express, Borneo Highway Express (tickets also available at Borneo Interland, 63 Main Bazaar, Tel: 413595), **Kirata & Sapphire Pacific Express** and **Sri Merah Express** bus services; **Syarikat Bus Baram** (Tel: 576700); **MTC Express** (Tel: 463161); **Sungei Merah** (Tel: 571888); **Borneo Express Bus** (Tel: 452717); **Eva Express** (Tel: 577333); **TransBorneo Resources** (Tel: 452271) and **ATS** (Tel: 457773). Buses to Sibu, Bintulu and Miri often involve a change of bus in Sarikei. Phone the bus companies for the latest timetables. The Visitor Information Centre has a display board with the latest bus schedules and prices.

Kuching Airport. No public bus service to and from the airport.
Bako. Petra Jaya bus No. 6, RM 2, 45 mins. First bus (from Kuching) 7.20 am, last bus 5.20 pm. Last regular bus back from Bako 5.50 pm. White minibuses (*bas sewa*) also go to Kampung Bako (RM 3 one way). They operate from 6 am to 5 pm and depart from the open air market. There is no fixed schedule - minibuses leave when they are full.
Bau. STC bus No. 2 or Bau Transport Co. bus No. 2, RM 4.60, approx. 1 hour. Every 20 mins. First bus (from Kuching) 6 am, last bus 6 pm. Buses depart from near the Saujana car park
Betong. STC Bus No. EP10, RM 25. Buses at 8 am and 1 pm.
Bintulu. See Sarikei for departures. RM 60.
Buntal. Petra Jaya bus No. 2D. RM 2, 35 mins. First bus (from Kuching) 6 am. Last bus back from Buntal 6.40 pm.
Damai / Sarawak Cultural Village (SCV). A Kuching-Damai shuttle bus service departs regularly from outside the Hotel Grand Margherita with drop offs at the resort hotels and Sarawak Cultural Village. One way fare is RM 12 (adults), RM 6 (children), takes approx. 40 mins. First bus (from Kuching) 7.30 am, last bus 10 pm. Last bus back from Damai 9 pm. For the full timetable check with the bell counter at the Hotel Grand Margherita.
Fairy and Wind Caves (from Bau Bus Station). Bau Transport Co. Bus No. 3, RM 1.40, every 1/2 hour from 6.20 am to 6 pm.
Kota Samarahan. Petra Jaya Bus No. 10A. RM 2.20. First bus (from Kuching) 6.30 am, last bus 5.15 pm. Last bus back Kota Samarahan 5.30 pm.
Kubah/Matang Wildlife Centre. No regular bus service from Kuching. Take a white local minibus. These white mini buses wait at the alleyway next to the shops in the Saujana car park complex. There is no fixed timetable, mini buses leave when there are enough passengers. Fare is RM 5 (Kubah) and RM 7 (MWC).
Lundu. (for Gunung Gading) STC bus No. EP07. RM 10 (a/c), approx. 2 hrs. Buses at 8 am, 11 am, 2 pm, and 4 pm. Buses depart from the regional express bus terminal.
Miri. See Sarikei for departures. RM 80.
Mukah. TransBorneo Resources at 7.30 am and 10 pm, RM 56. Biaramas at 9 pm and 10 pm, RM 55.
Penrissen Rd. Bus Terminal (for long-distance services). STC bus Nos. 3A, 4B, 6, 9, and many more (ask at STC office near Jln India/Jln Barrack junction). RM 1.20. First bus (from Kuching) 6.15 am, last bus 7 pm. If you are catching an early bus you may have to take a taxi to the terminal (RM 10).
Pontianak (Indonesia). RM 45.00, approx. 8 hrs. Buses depart from Penrissen Rd. Terminal. Biaramas/Tebakang Express (Tel: 456999) at 7.30 am. SJS (Tel: 456999) at 8 am and 1.00 pm. The upmarket SJS 'Super Executive' departs 11.00 am and costs RM 70. This bus has more leg room and meals are included. Kirata Express departs 7.30 am, Sapphire Pacific at 10.30 am and Sri Merah Express at 7 am and 10 am - book through Vital Focus Transportation (Tel: 453190 or 461277) or Borneo Interland (63 Main Bazaar, Tel: 413595). ATS (Tel: 457773) departs 7.30 am, Eva Express (Tel: 577333) at 7 am (economy) 9.30 am (economy) and 11 am (super class, RM 70) and Damri (Tel: 572098) at 7.30 am, 10.30 am and 12 noon.

Sarikei. RM 32. 5-6 hrs. Biaramas Express - departs 7.30 am, 9 am, 11.30 am, 2 pm, 5 pm, 7 pm, 9 pm and 10 pm. Borneo Highway Express - departs 6.30 am, 8.30 am, 10.30 am, 1 pm, 6 pm and 9 pm. PB Ekspres - departs 8.30 am, 2.30 pm, 4.30 pm and 8 pm. Suria Express departs 6.30 am, 7.30 am, 9.30 am, 12 noon, 1 pm, 3.30 pm, 6 pm, 9 pm and 10 pm. Syarikat Bus Baram departs 8 pm. MTC Express departs 4.30 pm and 9 pm. Borneo Express departs 8.45 am, 2.45 pm and 4 pm. TransBorneo departs 7.30 am and 10 pm. Sungei Merah departs 12.30 and 10 pm. Eva Express departs 9 am, 10 am and 10 pm.
Sematan (via Lundu). STC bus No. EP07, RM 15. See Lundu for departure times.
Semenggoh. STC bus Nos. 6. RM 4. Approx. every hour.
Serian. STC Express bus. No 3A. RM 4.00, approx. 1 hr. Every hour. First bus (from Kuching) 6.15 am, last bus 7 pm. Vital Focus Transportation. RM 5, approx. every hour. First bus from Kuching 6.30 am, last bus 10 pm.
Sibu. RM 40. 7 hrs. See Sarikei for departures.
Sri Aman. STC Express bus No. EP09. RM 19, approx 3 hrs, departs 7.45 am, 9.45 am, 1 pm, 3.15 pm and 7.15 pm. Departs from regional express bus terminal.

EXPRESS BOATS (Kuching to Sibu): **Express Bahagia**, service departs daily at 8.30 am. RM 45, 4 hrs. Tickets are sold at the jetty in Pending. It's advisable to get there 30 mins before departure. Taxi fare is RM 15-20.

SAMPANS (known locally as *Tambangs*): To get across river take one of the small ferries that connect the riverside kampungs to the town. Place the fare (40 cents) on the seat as you leave. Hiring a *sampan* (RM 20-25 per hour) is a great way to see the river and the waterfront villages. From the river you'll have great views of the city, get in close to the villages and get some good photos of river life.

RIVER CRUISES: **CPH Travel**, 70 Padungan Rd (Tel: 243708 or 013-8012826), offer morning river cruises (9 am) and sunset cruises (5pm) in high-powered pontoon boats. RM 40 (adult), RM 20 (child). Cruises last approx. 2-21/2 hours and offer a unique introduction to Kuching and life on the Sarawak River. Call CPH for full cruise itineraries.
Harbour Cruises (Tel: 240366 Fax: 240367) offer 11/2 hr afternoon (3.15 pm) and sunset (5.30 pm) cruises on a large double-decker boat, which is also available for charter.

TAXIS: Airport to town is RM 23 - buy a coupon at the taxi stand at the airport. Town to the airport is RM 23. At the moment not all Kuching taxis use meters so agree the fare first. Taxis can always be found outside the big hotels and at the taxi stand where Jln Gambier becomes Leboh Jawa. Alternatively, call 343343/342255 or 348898 for 24-Hour Radio Taxi service (RM 1 surcharge). Short distances around town are RM 7-12.

CAR HIRE: This is a great way to explore in and around Kuching. A number of tour operators provide chauffeur-driven cars, vans or 4WD vehicles, but there are only a few fully-fledged self-drive companies operating in Kuching. Be wary of unlicensed operators, as they will not be fully insured - look for the Hire & Drive Permit fixed to the windscreen. At peak periods it is advisable to book a car in advance.

Borneo Interland, 63 Main Bazaar, Tel: 413595, 426328 (24 hrs), 012-8083309 Fax: 411619, Email: bitravel@myjaring.net. www.bitravel.com.my. Self-drive Proton cars & 8-seat Toyota vans, chauffeur driven Mercedes cars & 13-seat Inokom minibuses. Half-day rates available. Also at Merdeka Palace Hotel, Tel: 258000 Ext 8018.
Cat City Holidays, Lot 2537, 1st Floor, Central Park Commercial Centre. Tel: 412500 (24 hrs 019-8865282), Fax: 413500, Email: catcity@streamyx.com. www.catcityholidays.com. Airport counter Tel/Fax: 452200. Self-drive Perodua & Proton cars, Toyota MPVs, plus chauffeured Mercedes limos, van and coaches.

Golden System Car Rental, 58-1B, 1st Flr, Block G, Pearl Commercial Centre, Jln Tun Razak. Tel: 333609, Fax: 343609, Email: goldencr88@hotmail.com. www.goldencr.com.my. Airport counter Tel: 611359. Wide selection of self-drive vehicles. Half day and long term rates available.
Hornbill Car Rental, Lot 99, Jln. Datuk Abang Abd Rahim Lorong 5B, Tel: 343469, Fax: 426692, Email: hbcrsb@streamyx.com.
Pronto Car Rental, No. 98, 1st Floor, Jln Padungan. Tel: 237889 (24 hrs 013-8116778), Fax: 236889. www.prontocarrental.com.
Mayflower Car Rental, No 21, 1st Floor, Travillion Commercial Centre, Jln Petanak. Tel: 410110, Fax: 410115, Email: mcr-kc@mayflower.com.my. www.mayflowercarrental.com. Airport counter Tel: 575223. Perodua, Proton & Nissan cars, Toyota & Naza MPVs.
Wah Tung Travel Service, 7K Ban Hock Rd, Tel: 419999, Fax: 464900, Email: wahtung@tm.net.my. www.wahtung.travel. Chauffeur driven limousine hire (Proton limousine, Mercedes & Vans). Airport Branch Tel: 616900, Email: wtapt@streamyx.com.

TOUR OPERATORS: Kuching has many licensed tour operators offering a wide choice of tours and excursions (see list below). Their prices are very competitive, especially if you are in a group, are often better value than organising the trip yourself, and you also have the benefit of a knowledgeable local guide to accompany you. Beware of unlicensed tour operators or individuals offering tours, as they and their vehicles will not be properly insured.

Al-Quds Travel (S) Sdn Bhd, No 218-A, Lot 358, Jln Satok, 934000 Kuching. Tel: 232411, Fax: 411413.
Bel-Air Travel & Tours Sdn Bhd, 255, Datuk Wee Kheng Chiang Road, 93000 Kuching. Tel: 414419, Fax: 241979, Email: alice.belair@gmail.com.
Borneo Adventure Sdn Bhd, 55 Main Bazaar, 93000 Kuching. Tel: 245175, Fax: 422626, Email: info@borneoadventure.com.
Borneo Exploration Tours & Travel Sdn Bhd, 76 Wayang Street, 93000 Kuching. Tel: 252137, Fax: 252526, Email: chris@borneoexplorer.com.my.
Borneo Fairyland Travel & Tour Sdn Bhd, No 18, Ground Floor, Main Bazaar, 93000 Kuching. Tel: 420194/5, Fax: 420198, Email: bftravel@tm.net.my.
Borneo Interland Travel Sdn Bhd, No 63, 1st Floor Main Bazaar, 93000 Kuching. Tel: 413595/426328, Fax: 411619, Email: bitravel@myjaring.net.
Borneo Tours Sdn Bhd, Lot 153, Jln Ban Hock , 93100 Kuching. Tel: 246422/424331, Fax: 236188, Email: inquiries@borneotour.com.my.
Borneo Transverse Tours & Travel Sdn Bhd, No 15, Ground Floor, Green Hill, 93100 Kuching. Tel: 257882/257784, Fax: 421419, Email: bntv@po.jaring.my.
C.A.N. Travel & Tours Sdn Bhd, 1st Floor, Lot 178, Sect 11, Bangunan Abd Rashid, Jlan Muda Hashin, Off Jln Satok, 93400 Kuching. Tel: 414003, Fax: 427003, Email: can@streamyx.com.
Cat City Holidays Sdn Bhd, Lot 2573, 1st Floor, Central Park Commercial Centre, Kuching. Tel: 414200, Fax: 414210, Email: catcity@streamys.com
Cempaka Travel & Tours Sdn Bhd, 298 Lot 2758, Central Park Commercial Centre, Kuching. Tel: 234799/235799, Fax: 242799, Email: campakatravel@gmail.com.
Chung Nan Travel Agencies Sdn Bhd, Lot 1043, Block 7 MTLD, Demak Laut Industrial Park, Kuching. Tel: 433001, Fax: 433002.
CPH Travel Agencies (Sarawak) Sdn Bhd, No 70, Padungan Road, 93000 Kuching. Tel: 421018/243708, Fax: 424587, Email: cphtrvl@po.jaring.my
Diethelm Travels & Tours Sdn Bhd, 2nd Floor, Lot 257 Chan Chin Ann Road, 93100 Kuching. Tel: 412778, Fax: 258320, Email: sarawak@dtm.po.my.

East West Agencies & Holidays Sdn Bhd, Ground Floor, 41, Jln P. Ramlee, Kuching. Tel: 413020, Fax: 412997, Email: eastwestholiday@gmail.com.

Friendship Travel Sdn Bhd, No 511, 1st Floor, Lrg 11A, Ang Cheng Ho, 93100 Kuching. Tel: 232633, Fax: 235633, Email: jckho@pd.jaring.my.

Fusanta Transport Travel Tour Sdn Bhd, No 20, Bangunan Dirgahayu, Jln Batu Lintang, Kuching. Tel: 248676, Fax: 247807, Email: fusanta@tm.net.my.

Gateway Holidays (M) Sdn Bhd, 22, Lot 314, 3rd Floor, Jln Bukit Mata Kuching, 93100 Kuching. Tel: 230811, Fax: 240811, Email: gatewayhol@yahoo.com.

Great Leap Tours Sdn Bhd, P 2-1-8(A), Chong Ling Park, Jln Tabuan, 93100 Kuching. Tel: 420818, Fax: 425816, Email: grttours@streamys.com.

Harrisons Trading (Sarawak) Sdn Bhd, No 28, Jln Green Hill, 93000 Kuching. Tel: 240977, Fax: 244542, Email: abg2n8@streamyx.com.

Hong Tai Travel Agency Sdn Bhd,115F Ban Hock Road, 93100 Kuching. Tel: 241267, Fax: 240255, Email: mys_htta@tm.net.my.

Ibanika Tours & Travel Sdn Bhd, Lot 10528, Ground Floor, Block 16, KCLD, Jln Tun Jugah, 93350 Kuching. Tel: 371155, Fax: 571155, Email: ibanika@icatours.gmail.com.

Ik Chin Travel Service (K) Sdn Bhd, 178 & 179, Ground Floor, Sect 12, Jln Haji Taha, 93400 Kuching. Tel: 411323, Fax: 242755, Email: ikchin@streamyx.com.

Insar Tours & Travel Sdn Bhd, Lot 2598, 2nd Floor Wisma Sandhu, Green Road, 93150 Kuching. Tel: 248112, Fax: 245112, Email: peiling@insar.com.

Inter-continental Travel Centre Sdn Bhd, Lot 572, Section 10, Jln Nanas, 93703 Kuching. Tel: 256155. Fax: 422518, Email: wanzie@inter-cont.com.my.

Inter-Borneo Tours Sdn Bhd, No 91, Gnd Floor, Jln Green Hill, 93150 Kuching. Tel: 233193, Fax: 233101, Email: info@inter-borneo.com.

Interworld Travel Service Sdn Bhd, No 8, 1st Floor, Temple Street, 93100 Kuching. Tel: 252344/241578, Fax: 424515, Email: sale@interworldborneo.com.

Journey Travel Agencies Sdn Bhd, Hilton Hotel Lobby, Jln Borneo, 93000 Kuching. Tel: 251187/232628, Fax: 240652, Email: dolores@pd.jaring.my.

Kalimantan Travel Services Sdn Bhd, No 7 Lot 267, Jln Song Thian Cheok, 93100 Kuching. Tel: 253408, Fax: 253418.

Ken-Air Tours (EM) Sdn Bhd, No7, Lot 267, Jln Song Thian Cheok, 93100 Kuching. Tel: 421696, Fax: 427299, Email: kakch88@streamyx.com.

Kingwood Travel Services (K) Sdn Bhd, Lot 176, Sect. 63, KTLD, Jln Padungan, Kuching. Tel: 339888, Fax: 339575, Email: kingwoodtrvl@yahoo.com.

Lewah Travel Service (K) Sdn Bhd, Ground Floor, Lot 8539, Golden Arch Shopping Mall, Jln Datuk Tawi Sli, 93250 Kuching. Tel: 418184, Fax: 243055, Email: Lewah@hotmail.com.

Lung Chia Pin Trading & Tours Sdn Bhd, No 42, Padungan Road, 93100 Kuching. Tel: 256781, Fax: 417408, Email: chiapin@pd.jaring.my.

Matahari Tours Sdn Bhd, Sublot 562, Lot 70 Sect 10, Lorong 6, Rubber Road, 93400 Kuching. Tel: 246333, Fax: 258770, Email: mata@mataharitours.com.

Mayflower Acme Tour Sdn Bhd, No 21, 1st Floor, Lot 418, Travilion Commercial Centre, Jln Padungan, 93100 Kuching. Tel: 410110/410117, Fax: 410115, Email: paulawee@mayflower.com.my.

Ming Ming Travel Services Sdn Bhd, Lot 173, Ground Floor, Jln Chan Chin Ann, 93100 Kuching. Tel: 419953, Fax: 231023, Email: mingtrvi@tm.net.my.

Natol Holiday & Tour Sdn Bhd, 1st & 2nd Flr, Lot 2820 Central Park, 3rd Mile, Kuching. Tel: 426100, Fax: 410200, Email: Natol_holidays@yahoo.com.

Nam Ho Tan Travel Service Sdn Bhd, 9 Lot 266, Ground Flr, Jln Song Thian Cheok, 93100 Kuching. Tel: 251532/256218, Fax: 418588, Email: namho@streamyx.com.

Orient Holidays Sdn Bhd, 1st Floor, Lot 171, Sect 51, Jln Song Thain Cheok, 93100 Kuching. Tel: 418899, Fax: 415559, Email: neisonlai@orientholidays.com.my.

Pelancongan Merdeka Sdn Bhd, Sub-Lot 562-563, Lrg. Rubber No 6, 93400 Kuching. Tel: 235235, Fax: 237273, Email: ticketing@pmerdeka.com.

Reliance Shipping & Travel (Sarawak) Sdn Bhd, No 13, Jln Song Thian Cheok, 93100 Kuching. Tel: 253404, Fax: 253411, Email: patricia.kho@rpb.com.my.
Sak Soon Travel Agencies Sdn Bhd, Wisma Phoenix, Lot No 3, Gnd Floor, Jln Song Thian Cheok, 93100 Kuching. Tel: 241692/241696, Fax: 417828, Email: saksoontravel@yahoo.com.
Samasa Tour & Travel Sdn Bhd, Lot 358, Gnd. Floor, Rubber Road, 93400 Kuching. Tel: 258888, Fax: 232697, Email: samasa@pd.jaring.my.
Sarawak Holiday Travel & Tours Sdn Bhd, 133 Yin Onn Building, Ban Hock Road, 93100 Kuching. Tel: 414169, Fax: 415197, Email: swakholi@tm.net.my.
Senett Tavel Agencies Sdn Bhd, Wisma Bidar, 169-169A, Jln Satok, 93400 Kuching. Tel: 428991, Fax: 429849, Email: chen@bidargroup.com.
Sin Hua Travel Service (K) Sdn Bhd, 8 Temple Street, 93100 Kuching. Tel: 246688, Fax: 424666, Email: sinhua@streamyx.com.
SITT Travel Sdn Bhd, Lot 153B, Ground Floor, Jln Satok, 93400 Kuching. Tel: 416131, Fax: 418131, Email: sittrvl@streamyx.com.
Soon-Air Travel Corporation Sdn Bhd, No 68, Wayang Street, 93100 Kuching. Tel: 413422, Fax: 415358, Email: sakch@tm.net.my.
Straits Central Travel & Tour Agencies Sdn Bhd, No 123, Lot 41, Sect 33, Tabuan Road, 93250 Kuching. Tel: 241271/3, Fax: 240713, Email: scatrvl@yahoo.com
Sun Travel Sdn Bhd, Lot 18, Ground Floor, Wisma Phoneix, Jln Song Thain Cheok, 93100 Kuching. Tel: 422023/412072, Fax: 429375, Email: sun@suntravelborneo.com.
Tanahmas Travel & Trading Sdn Bhd, Lot 563, Gnd Flr, Jln Datuk Wee Kheng Chiang, 93100 Kuching. Tel: 258976/415814, Fax: 258957, Email: tmaskch@hotmail.com.
Telang Usan Travel & Tours (S) Sdn Bhd, Lot 220, KTLD, Jln Ban Hock, 93732 Kuching. Tel: 236945/6, Fax: 236589, Email: tusan@streamyx.com.
The Sarawak Steamship Co. Bhd, No 52, Main Bazaar, 93000 Kuching. Tel: 243366, Fax: 242703, Email: tsscb@pd.jaring.my.
Tours of Joy Sdn Bhd, 30M Gnd Flr, Teochew Association Building, Jln Tubuan, 93100 Kuching. Tel: 243089, Fax: 248080, Email: ycpek@tm.net.my.
Tropical Adventure Tours & Travel (Branch), No 4, Padungan Garden Arcade, Jln Song Thian Cheok, 93100 Kuching. Tel: 412566, Fax: 237566, Email: hthee@pc.jaring.my.
Tropical Hornbill Travel & Tours Sdn Bhd, 40 Ground Floor, Block E, Pearl Commercial Centre, Jln Tun Razak, 93450 Kuching. Tel: 333379, Fax: 336590, Email: t_hornbill@yahoo.com.
Unicatay Travel & Tours Sdn Bhd, 1st Floor, Lot 261, Chan Chin Ann Road, 93100 Kuching, Tel: 411879, Fax: 243567, Email: unicatay@hotmail.com.
Wah Tung Travel Service Sdn Bhd, 7K Ban Hock Road, 93100 Kuching. Tel: 248888, Fax: 411477, Email: wahtung@streamyx.com.

MEETINGS, INCENTIVES, CONFERENCES & EXHIBITIONS

Sarawak is an emerging MICE destination, with a wide array of unique products and attractions, and the state is determined to develop this market sector to the highest international standards. The process began with the setting up of the **Sarawak Convention Bureau**, the first of its kind in Malaysia, and continues with the opening of the **Borneo Convention Centre Kuching (BCCK)** in October 2009.

In addition to the BCCK, Kuching's major hotels also offer a wide range of convention and meeting facilities, whilst resorts are the base for secluded jungle and mountain retreats. Local destination management companies offer unusual incentive products such as rainforest adventures, volunteer camps, kayaking expeditions, and golfing in the clouds, to mention just a few.

Sarawak Convention Bureau, Kuching Head Office, Lot 31, Jln Masjid, 93400 Kuching (facing Padang Merdeka across from Merdeka Palace Hotel). Tel: 242516, Fax: 242519, Email: info@sarawakcb.com, Web: www.sarawakcb.com. The first point of contact for conference organisers and incentive planners, SCB offers a comprehensive range of services to convention and incentive planners. Check their website for regional offices and/or representatives in Kuala Lumpur, the UK and Australia.

Borneo Convention Centre Kuching, Queen's Court, Sublot-5, Lot 9936, 4th Floor, Block E, Jln Wan Alwi, 93350 Kuching (Pre-Opening Office). Tel: 453350, Fax: 457350, Email: see website for individual Email addresses, Web: www.bcck.com.my. The first purpose-built convention centre on the island of Borneo, BCCK has a state-of-the-art design with a flexible capacity for events of up to 5,000 guests. It is currently accepting bookings for events from late September 2009 onwards.

ACCOMMODATION

Accommodation ranges from budget hostels to luxury international class hotels. The premises listed below are located in the central area and within easy walking distance of major tourist attractions and the central business district, unless otherwise stated. Star ratings awarded by the Malaysian Association of Hotels are shown where applicable, but please note that many hotels do not apply for rating. Rating criteria can be found at http://www.hotels.org.my/guidelines_rating.php.

Rack room rates are shown in bands as follows:

Band A : RM Under RM 50
Band B : RM 50 - 149
Band C : RM 150 - 299
Band D : RM 300 plus

Note: some hotels and guest houses may have rooms in more than one category.

Where no postcode is given, all addresses are 93100 Kuching, Sarawak, Malaysia. Out-of-town hotels and resorts are described in the Santubong and Damai and around Kuching sections. National Park accommodation is described in the National Parks section.

International Class Hotels

Kuching has an excellent selection of de-luxe hotels. Promotional rates are available at certain times of the year - please enquire for details.

Four Points By Sheraton, Kuching (4*). Lot 3186 - 3187, Block 16 KCLD, Jln Lapangan Terbang Baru, 93350 Kuching. Tel: 466666, Fax: 466888, Email: fourpoints.kuching@fourpoints.com. www.fourpoints.com/kuching. 421 rooms. Band D. Kuching's largest hotel, soft opening March 2009. Outlets include *The Eatery* (coffee house), *Wrapped* (cafe/deli) and *The Lounge* (cocktail lounge). Located 2 km from Kuching International Airport, 20 minutes drive to city centre. Features include Swimming Pool & Spa, Family Room, 24-hr Fitness Centre, 24-hr Business Centre, Non-smoking Floor, Rooms/Facilities for Disabled Guests, Extensive Conference & Banquet Facilities.

Hilton Kuching (5*), Jln Tunku Abdul Rahman, PO Box 2396, 93748 Kuching. Tel: 248200 Fax: 428984. Email: kuching@hilton.com. www.hilton.com. 315 rooms. Band D. Outlets include *Waterfront Cafe* (Coffee House), *Caffe Cino* (Coffee, Cakes, Fresh Breads & Panini), *The Steakhouse* (Fusion Cuisine), *Toh Yuen* (Cantonese & Szechuan Cuisine, Dim Sum Lunches), *Senso* (Cocktail Bar), *Matang Terrace* (Poolside Bar & Open-Air Restaurant), *Mizube* (Sushi & Oyster Bar), *The Bakeshop* (Bakery & Patisserie). Directly overlooking Sarawak River. Features include Executive Floor with Club Room, Executive Business Centre, Airport Desk (at Kuching Airport), Clark Hatch Fitness Centre, Flood-lit Tennis Court, Non-Smoking Floors, 24-Hour Business Services, Extensive Conference & Banquet Facilities. Twinned with Hilton Batang Ai Longhouse Resort (see Longhouse Tours section).

Hotel Grand Margherita Kuching (4*) (formerly Holiday Inn Kuching), Jln Tunku Abdul Rahman, PO Box 2362, 93100 Kuching. Tel: 423111 Fax: 426169 Email: contact@gmh.my (general), reservations@gmh.my (room reservation). 288 rooms. Band D. Outlets include *Orchid Garden Coffee House* (Open 24 hours on Fri, Sat & Eve of Public Holiday), *Meisan* (Halal-Certified Szechuan Cuisine), *Rajang Lobby Lounge* (lobby bar), *Anchor Riverview Deck* (light meals & cocktails). Situated directly on riverbank overlooking Fort Margherita and Malay villages. Features include Executive Club Floor & Lounge, Outdoor Swimming Pool & Children's Playground, Non-smoking Floor, Business Centre, Rooms & Facilities for Disabled Guests, Extensive Conference & Banquet Facilities, Shopping Centre Adjacent.

Merdeka Palace Hotel & Suites (5*), Jln Tun Abang Haji Openg, 93000 Kuching. Tel: 258000, Fax: 425400 Email: info@merdekapalace.com. www.merdekapalace.com. 213 rooms (incl. 99 Executive Suites & Apartment Suites). Band D. Outlets include *Aurora Court* (Coffee House, All-Day Dining), *Ristorante Beccari* (Italian Fine Dining), *Seattle Coffee & Tea Co* (Coffee & Tea Bar), *The Victoria Arms* (English Pub with Live Music), *YN Cellar* (Wine Bar), *La Habana* (Cigar Divan & Lounge). Situated in the city centre directly overlooking Padang Merdeka. Features include Health and Fitness Centre, Swimming Pool, Non-Smoking Floors, Executive Business Centre, Rooms & Facilities for Disabled Guests, Wireless Internet throughout & Broadband Internet Connection available, Extensive Conference & Banquet Facilities, Children's Playground, Satellite TV, Baby Sitting Service.

Novotel Interhill, Jln Mathies. Opening late 2009. Tel: 412555 for trade enquiries, or watch the Novotel group's website, www.novotel.com, for announcements. 389 rooms, expected to be Band D.

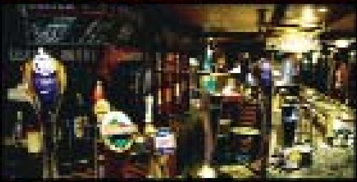
Riverside Majestic Kuching (4*) (formerly Crowne Plaza Riverside), Jln Tunku Abdul Rahman, PO Box 2928, 93756 Kuching. Tel: 247777, Fax: 425858, Email: contact@rmh.my (general), reservations@rmh.my (room reservation). 241 rooms. Band D. Outlets include *Cafe Majestic* (Coffee House), *River Palace* (Halal-Certified Cantonese Cuisine), *Coca* (Thai Steamboat), *The Club* (Cocktails) *Blue Lagoon* (Poolside Restaurant with Nightly BBQ Steamboat Buffet), *La Patisserie* (Bakery). Spectacular views of Kuching Waterfront and surrounding city. Features include Executive Club Floor & Lounge, Cardio Exercise Room, In-room Massage Service, Tennis & Squash Courts, Outdoor Swimming Pool, Non-smoking Floor, Rooms/Facilities for Disabled Guests, Business Centre, Extensive Conference & Banquet Facilities. Cineplex, Shopping Centre & Bowling Centre located in same complex.



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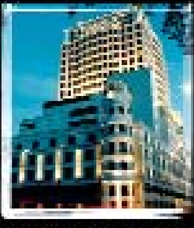












Standard Hotels

Kuching has a good selection of business hotels offering high levels of comfort and excellent value for money. Some hotels in the Budget Hotels section (see below) also have rooms and facilities belonging in this category. All hotels are centrally located except where otherwise stated.

360 Hotel - see Serviced Apartments section.

Harbour View Hotel (3*), Lorong Temple, 93000 Kuching. Tel: 274666, Fax: 274777, Email: sales@harbourview.com.my. www.harbourview.com.my. 245 rooms. Band C. Outlets include *Cafe Harapan* (Asian & Continental Cuisine), *Zodiac Lounge* (Lobby Bar & Karaoke). Located next to Tua Pek Kong Temple overlooking Kuching Waterfront with spectacular views of Sarawak River & surrounding area. Features include In-House Movies & Satellite TV, Physiotherapy Service, Anti-Dust Mite Mattresses, In-Room Internet Port, Business Centre W/Secretarial & Internet Services, Extensive Conference & Banquet Facilities, Convenience Shop, Concierge & Shoe Shine Service, Seamless & One Stop Service Concept (guests need make only 1 phone call for room service, housekeeping, etc.).

Hotel Grand Continental (4*), Lot 42, Section 46, Jln Ban Hock. Tel: 230399, Fax: 230339/255099, Email: sales_reservation@ghihotels.com.my. www.ghihotels.com.my. 192 rooms. Band C. Situated in city centre / business district. Features include *Brasserie Kuching Coffee House*, Pool, Business Centre, Health Spa, Non-Smoking Rooms, Rooms & Facilities for Disabled Guests, Ladies Rooms, Baby Cots Available, Extensive Banquet & Conference Facilities.

Kingwood Inn (3*), Jln Padungan, PO Box 2842, 93756 Kuching (short taxi ride from centre). Tel: 330888, Fax: 332888, Email: kingwd@tm.net.my. www.kuchinghotels.net. 90 rooms. Band B-C. Pool & full facilities.

Kuching Park Hotel (3*), Lot 606, Jln Padungan, PO Box 701, 93714 Kuching (short taxi ride from centre). Tel: 239888, Fax: 238799, Email: kuchingpark@yahoo.com. www.kuchingparkhotel.com.my 108 rooms. Full facilities. Band B.

Regal Court Hotel (3*), Lot 45 & 66, Section 10 KTLD, Jln Tun Ahmad Zaidi Adruce, 93400 Kuching. Tel: 412211 Fax: 413211 Email: regal_c@tm.net.my. www.borneohotels.net. 42 rooms. Band B-C. Boutique-style hotel, close to Weekend Market.

Regency Rajah Court Hotel (3*), Kuching By-Pass, Pending, 93450 Kuching (15 min taxi ride from centre). Tel: 484791/484799 Fax: 482750 Email: rajcourt@tm.net.my. www.theregencyhotel.com.my/rajahcourt. 108 rooms. Band B-C. Pool & full facilities.

Serviced Apartments

360 Hotel, Hock Lee Centre, Hotel Tower, Jln Datuk Abang Abdul Rahim, 93450 Kuching (short taxi ride from centre). Tel: 484888, Fax: 484999, Email: reservation@360kuching.com. www.360kuching.com. 95 luxury apartments and rooms. Band C-D, monthly & long-term rates available. Pool, fitness centre, 18th floor coffee shop & full facilities. Shopping centre adjacent.

Chonglin Plaza Hotel & Suites - see Budget Hotels section

Jinhold Service Apartment, Lot 15958, Block 11, MTLD, Jalan Song, 93350 Kuching. Tel : 368855 / 370888, Fax : 360888. www.jinholdapartment.com.my, Daily and monthly rates available. Fitness cenrte and laundry facilities.
Merdeka Palace Hotel & Suites - see International Class Hotels section.
Somerset Gateway Kuching, 9 Jln Bukit Mata. Tel: 250958, 252958 (reservations), Fax: 259958, Email: enquiry.kuching@the-ascott.com. www.somerset.com. 72 deluxe apartments. Band D, monthly & long-term rates available. Pool, fitness centre & full facilities.
Wesberly Apartments, Lot 2812, Block 195, Rubber Road West, 94000 Kuching Tel: 246197, Fax: 243521, Email: siok60@streamyx.com. www.wesberly.com.my. Family-run apartment house in secluded location near Sunday Market, 4 well appointed apartment suites. Band C-D, monthly & long-term rates available.

Budget Hotels

Kuching's budget hotels offer excellent value. All rooms have air conditioning and attached bathroom (except where indicated), and most have TV and phone.

Arif Hotel, Jln Haji Taha. Tel: 241211 Fax: 241212. Band B. Located near Kuching Mosque.
Borneo Hotel (2*), 30 C-F Jln Tabuan. Tel: 244122 Fax: 254848. 65 rooms. Band B-C.
Central Inn, 172-3 Jln Tan Sri Ong Kee Hui. Tel: 417276/7 Fax: 417297. Band A-B. 10 mins walk from city centre.
Chonglin Plaza Hotel & Suites, 107 Green Road, 93150 Kuching (short taxi ride from centre). Tel: 256999/252999, Fax: 411233, Email: sales@chonglinplaza.com.my. www.chonglinplaza.com.my. 250 suites, rooms & 3-bed apartments. Band B-C. Pool, fitness centre, monthly & long-term rates available.
Chung Hin Hotel, 74 Jln Padungan. Tel: 411678 Fax: 428343. Band A-B.
City Inn, 275-276 Jln Abell. Tel: 414866 Fax: 414869. Band A-B.
Culture Inn, 98 Jln Sekama (short taxi ride from Centre). Tel: 339333. Band A-B
Dormani Hotel, Lot 68, Jln Datuk Ajibah Abol, 93400 Kuching (located in Malay Kampung area near City Mosque). Tel: 241111/242222, Fax: 243333, Email: reservation@dormanihotel.com. www.dormanihotel.com. 70 rooms, Band B-C.
Empire Inn, Lot 262-263, Jln Chan Chin Ann. Tel: 428288, Fax: 243567, Email: empire_inn@hotmail.com. www.empireinn.com.my. Band B.
Fata Hotel, 1 Jln McDougall. Tel: 248111 Fax: 428987. Band B.
Fully Inn, 3631 Taman Timberland, 93300 Kuching (near Timberland Hospital), Tel: 232211, Fax: 239200. Band B.
Furama Hotel, 4 Jln Green Hill. Tel: 413561/416960 Fax: 417980. Band B.
Goodwood Inn, 16-17 Jln Green Hill. Tel: 244862 Fax: 417980. Band B.
Green Mountain Lodging House, 1 Jln Green Hill. Tel: 416320 Fax: 246342 Email: lingks@pd.jaring.my. Band B.
GW Furama Apartment, 20 Jln Green Hill. Tel/Fax: 234237. Band A-B
Hua Kuok Inn (1*), Lot 227, Jln Ban Hock. Tel: 429788, Fax: 424329. Band B.
Hung Hung Inn, Lot 146, Jln Tun Ahmad Zaidi Adruce, 93400 Kuching (near Sarawak General Hospital). Tel: 231000, Fax: 231775, Email: hung2inn@tm.net.my. Band B
Kapit Hotel, 59, Jln Padungan. Tel: 244179, Fax: 418516. Band A-B.
Kuok Pin Hotel, 10 Jln Green Hill. Tel: 426822/3/4. Band A-B. Also operate the neighbouring John's Place guest house.
Laila Inn, 149-151 Jln Datuk Alibah Abol, 93400 Kuching. Tel: 420930/1/2, Fax: 238960. Band A-B. Near to Sunday Market & Malay kampongs.
Lime Tree Hotel, Lot 317, Abell Road, 93100 Kuching. Tel: 414600, Fax: 424600, Email: info@limetreehotel.com.my. www.limetreehotel.com.my. 50 rooms hotel, free wireless internet access throughout the hotel.

Liwah Hotel (2*), Lot 187, Section 47, Jln Song Thian Cheok. Tel: 429222, Fax: 423690, Email: sales@liwahhotel.com.my. www.liwahhotel.com.my. 93 rooms. Band B.
Longhouse Hotel, 182 Jln Abell. Tel: 429333, Fax: 248812. Band B.
Mandarin Lodging House, 6 Jln Green Hill, Tel: 418269/410139. Band A-B.
Marlin Inn, 571-3 Jln Nanas, 93400 Kuching. Tel: 233500, Fax: 236500. Band B. Near to Sunday Market.
Motel Siangolila, 200-204, Section 51, Jln Padungan, (behind Everrise Supermarket). Tel: 425221/2/3 Fax: 243567. Band A-B.
Nemo Inn, No 85, 1st Floor, Jln Ban Hock. Tel: 235533, Email: nemo_inn_kch@hotmail.com. Band A-B
Orchid Inn, 2 Jln Green Hill. Tel: 411417/25/27. Band A-B.
Penview Inn (3*), Lot 3411, Block D, Jln Tun Razak (15 min taxi ride from centre). Tel: 341200 Fax: 341201. 112 rooms. Band B.
River View Inn, 22-23 Jln Green Hill. Tel: 412561. Band B.
Samudra Court Hotel, Lot 382, Lorong 6, Jln Nanas, 93400 Kuching. Tel: 256363, Fax: 419363, Email: shukardiadam@yahoo.com.my. www.samudracourt.com. Band B. Convenient for Sunday Market.
Supreme Hotel, Jln Ban Hock. Tel: 255155, Fax: 252522, Email: reservation@supremehotel.my. www.supremehotel.my. 68 rooms. Band B.
Tai Pan Hotel, 93 Jln Padungan, behind Hock Ping Cafe. Tel: 417363/418363 Fax: 427185. Band A-B.
Telang Usan Hotel (3*), Jln Ban Hock. Tel: 415588 Fax: 425316 Email: ask@telangusan.com. www.telangusan.com. 66 rooms. Band B. Kuching's only Orang Ulu owned and managed hotel. Full facilities. Includes *Dulit Coffee House* (6am-12 midnight) and *Golden Phoenix Restaurant* (Szechuan Cuisine). Conference rooms available.
Thompson Inn, Lot 496-497, Jln Nanas, 93400 Kuching. Tel: 426885. Fax: 427895. Band B. Convenient for Sunday Market.
Tune Hotel, Taman Sri Sarawak (opp. Hilton). Opening March 2009. Tel: 03-79625888 (call centre). www.tunehotels.com. Band A-B. Budget hotel chain operating airline style booking system with price based on demand. 135 rooms. Online, call centre or walk-in booking only.

Guest Houses, Lodges, Hostels and Homestays

Anglican Guest House, St. Thomas Cathedral, Jln Tun Haji Openg. Tel 414027. Band A. Mainly for people on church business - rooms not always available to the public.
Annah Rais Longhouse Homestay, No.71, Kampung Annah Rais, Jln Borneo Heights, 94200 Padawan, Sarawak. Community run homestay project in historic Bidayuh village. Band C. Contact via website, www.longhouseadventure.com.
B & B Inn, 1st Floor, 30-1, Jln Tabuan (next to Borneo Hotel). Tel: 237366 Email: bnbswk@streamyx.com. Band A-B.
Basaga Holiday Residences, Basaga House, lot 69-70, Jalan Tabuan, Off Chong LIn Park, 93220 Kuching. Tel: 417069, Fax: 416069, Email: reservations@basaga.com. www.basaga.com. 33 well-equipped rooms and 10 beds dormitory. 7 mins drive from city centre.
Beds Guesthouse, 229 Jln Padungan (near Cat Statue). Tel: 424229, Fax: 423299, Email: reservation@bedsguesthouse.com. www.bedsguesthouse.com. Band A (dorm), Band B.
Berambih Lodge, 134 Jln Ewe Hai. Tel: 238589, Email: info@berambih.com. www.berambih.com. Band A (dorm), Band B (shared bath).
Borneo B&B, 24 Jln Tabuan. Tel: 231300, Email: borneobedbreakfast@yahoo.com. Band A.
Borneo Paradise B&B, Lot 47 - 48 Jln Abell. Tel: 380050, Fax: 250039, Email: proholidays@myjaring.net. Band B.

Borneo Seahare, 2nd Floor, Teochew Association Building, Jln Tabuan. Tel: 016-8868860, Email: booking@borneoseahare.com. www.borneoseahare.com. Band A. Online bookings only.

Borneo Trekkers, 51 Upper China St. Tel: 256050, Email: borneotrekkers @hotmail.com. Band A (dorm), Band B (shared bath).

Brookes Terrace, 291 Jln Abell. Tel: 427008, Email: reservation @brookesterrace.org. www.brookesterrace.org. Band B.

Cozee Hostel, No 5, 3rd Flr, Jln Song Thian Cheok. Tel: 016-8881199. Band A (dorm), Band B.

Cozyzzz Hotel, 21 Jln Green Hill. Tel: 233961, Fax: 255961, Email: cozyzzzkch@gmail.com. Band A-B (shared bath).

The Fairview, 6 Jln Taman Budaya (near Sarawak Museum). Tel: 240017, Email: the_Fairview@yahoo.com. www.geocities.com/the_fairview. Band A (dorm), Band B (rooms). Family-run heritage guest house in large garden, offering living & dining rooms, TV room and kitchen.

Fendy Lodge, 30-0, 1st Floor, Jln Tabuan. Tel: 237366, Email: fendylodge @hotmail.com. Band B.

Jambu Garden Chalets, 23 Jln Crookshank. Opening mid-2009, check www.jamburestaurant.com or call 012 3721850 for details.

Kuching Hotel, 6 Leboh Temple. Tel: 413985. Band A (fan, shared bath).

Kuching Waterfront Lodge, 15 Main Bazaar. Tel: 231111, Fax: 239111, Email: admin@kuchingwaterfrontlodge.com. www.kuchingwaterfrontlodge.com. Band A (dorm), Band B.

Lodge 121, 1st Floor, Section 33, Jln Tabuan (opp. Borneo Hotel). Tel: 428121, Fax: 421121, Email: enquiry@lodge121.com. www.lodge121.com. Band A (dorm), Band B (shared bath).

My Sarawak Travel Café, 94 Jln Carpenter. Tel/Fax: 256729, Email: enquiry@mysarawaktravelcafe.com. www.mysarawaktravelcafe.com. Band A (dorm), Band B.

Nanga Damai, luxury homestay, see Damai & Santubong section.

Nomad Borneo, 1st Floor, 3 Jln Green Hill. Tel/Fax: 237831, Email: info@borneobnb.com. www.borneobnb.com. Band A (dorm/shared bath), Band B.

Park Lane Lodge, 10 Lorong park, 93300 Kuching. Tel: 241612, Fax: 244945, Email: info@parklanelodge.com. www.parklanelodge.com. Set in large garden 5 min from centre. Band A (dorm), Band B.

Pinnacles, Lot 21, Block G, Taman Sri Sarawak (opp. Hilton). Tel: 419100, Fax: 429100, Email: reservation@pinnacleskuching.com. www.pinnacleskuching.com. Band A (dorm), Band B.

Rom Orchid Garden, 33A, Lorong 5, Jln Siol Kandis, Petra Jaya, 93050 Kuching. Tel: 447001, 016-8625999 Email: kakrom@hotmail.com. 5 rooms in a Malay kampung house plus self-contained bungalow. Band B. Take a sampan (tambang) to Pengkalan Sapi jetty, then 10 mins walk or get the waiting minivan to drop you off.

Singgahsana Lodge, No 1 Temple St. (30 m from Waterfront), Tel: 429277, Fax: 429267, Email: info@singgahsana.com. www.singgahsana.com. Kuching's first boutique backpacker lodge. Stylish, well appointed rooms with individual air-con (some with shared bath). Band A (dorm), Band B.



Village House by Singgahsana, see Damai & Santubong Section.

Transit Point, Jln Tabuan Roundabout. Tel: 239961, Fax: 259961, Email: transitpointkch@gmail.com. Band A (shared bath).

Kuching has a great deal to offer the adventurous gourmet. As well as typical Malaysian and Western fare, there is a whole range of local delicacies worth trying - see *Sarawak Specialities*. At the last count there were more than a thousand food outlets in Kuching. As we can barely scratch the surface in this guide, we have generally focused on popular, well known and centrally located outlets. We strongly recommend that visitors who have a little time get out and about in Kuching's suburbs and make their own dining discoveries.

COFFEE SHOPS

Coffee-shops with their attendant food-stalls are dotted all over town. Some of the most interesting and traditional ones are found around Jln Carpenter, Main Bazaar and Padungan Road, The coffee shops on Lebuh Temple are conveniently located near the budget hotels on Jln Green Hill, and serve a wide selection of dishes, including good roasted chicken rice (Green Hill Cafe). At lunchtimes, many coffee shops serve *economy rice, mixed rice, fast food or nasi campur*. These are four different names for the same dish - a plate of rice with portions of meat, fish, curry and vegetables selected from the delicacies on display. Cheap (RM 4-6), delicious and very filling.

COFFEE BARS

Bing, 84 Pandungan Road. Serves a range of coffees, teas and light snacks. Air-con lounge area at front, open smoking area at the back. Tel: 421880.
Caffe Cino in the Hilton serves up a range of continental coffees, specialty teas and fresh fruit juices, plus a variety of panini, bagels and sandwiches as well as freshly baked breads and pastries.
Coffee Bean - the Kuching branch of this international chain can be found on the terrace outside Sarawak Plaza.
Deli Cafe, 88 Main Bazaar. Ground floor coffee bar and patisserie with an art gallery in the 1st floor.
The Seattle Coffee & Tea Co, Merdeka Palace Hotel. Local branch of this famous chain, featuring a very wide range of freshly roasted coffees and freshly brewed teas served with cakes and pastries.
Starbucks Coffee Co. Branches at Kuching International Airport, The Spring shopping mall and Jalan Song.

FOOD CENTRES

These are the most popular eating places amongst locals. There is always a wide selection of value-for-money stalls and you can select food from as many as you like. If you are not familiar with a dish, just be adventurous and try it. Nine times out of ten you will be delighted, and if you don't like it, nobody will be offended.

Kubah Ria (across river near suspension bridge). A bit difficult to get to unless you have transport. If you can make it, try the delicious Sop Kambing (mutton soup) at Doreen Abdullah's, served with noodles, rice or crusty French bread.
Lau Ya Keng Chinese Food Centre, Jln Carpenter (opposite temple). A wide range of Chinese food stalls. One sells excellent fish balls (afternoons only), while another sells superb fish and prawn soup from late afternoon until late at night.
Open Air Market, (near Electra House) Jln Market. Oddly named, as the whole area is covered. A wide selection of Chinese and Malay food stalls. Some very reasonably priced seafood and noodle stalls operate late into the evening. Famous for beef noodles, rice porridge and fresh soya bean milk.

Sarawak Plaza Food Court (next to Holiday Inn). Good selection of Malay, Chinese, Japanese and Western food stalls in the basement of this busy shopping centre. 10 am to 10 pm.
Satok Bridge, on river front below Satok bridge (any Petra Jaya bus or take a taxi). Excellent barbecued chicken and seafood.
Satok Road, left side of road heading out of town. Lots of Malay food stalls - busiest during the Weekend Market. Evenings only.
Saujana Food Centre (5th floor of the car park near the Mosque). Take the lift to reach the food centre. Mostly Malay cooking with some stalls selling seafood.
Top Spot Food Court, Jln Bukit Mata Kuching. A wide range of food stalls set in landscaped surroundings on the breezy top floor of a car park. Choices include Malay curries, Malay and Chinese seafood, claypot dishes, satay and even steaks. Unusual and very popular.
Tun Jugah Food Court, Jln Tunku Abdul Rahman. Modern food court on the 2nd floor, with a good choice of food including a selection of Chinese dishes and Malay hawker-stall favourites.

CHINESE

Kuching has a huge selection of Chinese food outlets, from simple noodle stalls to full-blown banqueting palaces. Many of them feature regular food promotions - see local press for details.

Bla Bla Bla, see Continental/Western
Café Harapan, Harbour View Hotel. As well as the usual hotel coffee shop favourites, Cafe Harapan serves an interesting selection of Foochow-style noodle dishes originating from Fuzhou in Southern China.
Fook Hoi in Jln Padungan is an old-fashioned coffee shop, famous for its Sio Bee and Ha Kau (pork dumplings). Daytime only.
Harbour Court, end of Jln Chan Chin Ann, turn right to the stall with the red sign and Chinese characters - the home of Foochow noodles. The 'Daud Special' is one of the heartiest breakfasts in town - thick noodles served in a delicious herbal soup with enormous chunks of chicken.
Jong Siang Teng, 68 Carpenter St. Serves Hokkien-style pork leg rice and chicken rice. Daytime only.
Juat Siang Café, 34 Carpenter St. Good beef noodle soup. Daytime only.
Li Garden, 1st Floor, Hock Lee Centre, Tel: 340785. Famous for its Peking Duck and other high-quality Cantonese dishes. Booking essential in the evening. Take a taxi.
Life Café, 108 Ewe Hai Street, Tel: 411754. 11 am-10pm (closed Tuesdays). Chinese tea house serving inexpensive food (RM 4-6) plus wide range of coffees and teas. Good place to stop whilst exploring Old Kuching.
Lok Thian, 1st Floor, Bangunan Bee San, Jln Padungan. Tel: 331310/335042. 11 am -2 pm, 6-10 pm. Gourmet Chinese cuisine, pleasant surroundings and good service. Thai and Japanese restaurants on ground & top floors. Booking advisable, especially weekends. Take a taxi.
Meisan in the Grand Margherita Hotel offers high quality Halal-certified Szechuan cuisine.
Min Joo, corner of Carpenter & Bishopsgate St. Small but very popular coffee shop selling Chinese noodle dishes. At breakfast time the place is packed.
Ming Heng Café, 6 Carpenter St. This old-style Chinese coffee shop is another popular breakfast hang out. A choice of *laksa*, *chicken satay* and *kolo mee*.
River Palace in the Crowne Plaza Riverside is the place to go for Halal-certified Cantonese banquet fare.
Ting Noodle House, 117B, Lot 132 Ban Hock Road. This lunchtime favourite serves spicy Taiwanese beef noodles, dumplings and a range of noodle and rice dishes. 8 am - 8.30 pm. 8 am - 2 pm on Sun.

Toh Yuen in the Hilton serves Cantonese *Dim Sum* at lunchtimes and gourmet Szechuan cuisine in the evenings.

CONTINENTAL / WESTERN

All major hotels serve continental cuisine, usually in their coffee houses. Diners have a choice of a la carte or all-you-can-eat buffets. Most also feature high tea buffets on Saturdays or Sundays. Look out for food promotions advertised in the local press. Some coffee shops and food centres have stalls selling Western food. **Continental or American Breakfast** is normally served in hotel restaurants, but most Chinese coffee shops will serve eggs with toast and jam or honey if you ask for them.

Beccari's Ristorante, Merdeka Palace Hotel. Beccari's chef prepares authentic dishes from all over Italy, including proper Italian thin-crust pizza. The consistently good food and friendly and efficient service add up to a very pleasant dining experience. Open 12 noon - 11 pm daily.
Bla Bla Bla, Tabuan Road (opposite Fata Hotel). Tel: 233944. Popular restaurant with an interesting mix of Chinese and fusion dishes. Booking advised at weekends. 6 pm - 11.30 pm. Closed Tuesdays.
Dulit Coffee House, Telang Usan Hotel, a pleasant terrace cafe serving generous portions of western and local food, including delicious French oxtail stew and the only genuine chicken kebabs in Kuching.
Ipanema - Jln Padungan (next to Soho). Stylish wine bar offering tapas-style snacks and a-la carte meals.
Jambu, 32 Crookshank Rd, Tel: 235292. Sprawling colonial style bungalow conceals a stylish restaurant offering Mediterranean cuisine with local ingredients and "modern Borneo cuisine" plus a pleasant garden terrace for chilling out. 15 mins walk from city centre, or take a taxi. Open 5.30pm - 12.30 am, closed Mondays
The Junk, 80 Wayang St., Tel: 259450. A Kuching landmark, the Junk features rustic Chinese ambience and Italian influenced cooking. 6pm - 12.30 am daily. Booking advised at weekends.
Lunch & Such, 94 Main Bazaar (in Artrageously Ramsay Ong gallery). Tasty home cooked western dishes plus local specialities in an elegant gallery setting.
Magenta, 32 Lot 141 Jln Nanas, 93400 Kuching, Tel: 237878. Fine dining restaurant offering modern Italian & fusion cuisine, located in an elegant Malay wooden house. 6 pm - midnight. Last order 11.30 pm Closed Mondays. Take a taxi.
Mr Ho's Fine Foods located at Crown Square, Pending. Serve great western food, pasta's, wine and juices.
Orchid Garden, Holiday Inn Kuching, serves Western and local specialities. Sun -Thu: 6.00am - 1.00am.
Soho, 64 Jln Padungan. Tasty snacks and light meals are served in this lively bar (see Entertainment).
The Steakhouse in the Hilton serves high quality international cuisine. Substantial portions, stylish presentation and great cooking add up to the most sophisticated eating experience in Kuching. Open for dinner only, 6 pm - 10.30 pm.
Tao Gallery Cafe, Padungan Road. Ground floor cafe serving juices, teas, coffee, finger food and snacks, with an art gallery on the 1st floor. 11 am - midnight.
Toms, 82 Padungan Road. Understated elegance matches excellent cooking, with value-for-money lunchtime specials, a la carte in the evening, and coffee and cakes all day. Open 11.30 am - 11 pm Tue-Sun. Booking advisable, Tel: 247672.
Victoria Arms, Merdeka Palace Hotel, serves a wide range of traditional pub food throughout the day.
The Waterfront Cafe in the Hilton serves great buffet spreads with a different theme every day. The all-day buffet on Sunday and high tea on weekdays are both very popular - come early (or book) to get a table.

FAST FOOD & FRANCHISE OUTLETS

The golden arches of **McDonalds** are on Jln Tunku Abdul Rahman, opposite Sarawak Plaza. **Pizza Hut** is on the other side of the street a little further down. **KFC** has branches in Sarawak Plaza (next to Holiday Inn) and Riverside Shopping Centre. Local chain **Sugar Bun** is located in the Riverside Shopping Centre, while Roadhouse Grill is on the terrace outside Sarawak Plaza. Malaysian cake and fusion food outlet **Secret Recipe** is on Jln Song Thian Cheok, opposite the MAS office. See also Coffee Bars section.

INDIAN

It is not easy to find authentic Indian food in Kuching. Many of Kuching's "Indian" restaurants actually serve a mixture of Indian and Malay food. Saying that, there are a few places well worth trying.

Ammah Curry House, Jalan Tun Ahmad Zaidi Adruce, Serves a good varieties of Indian dishes.
Azreen Cafe, 351 Lorong 12, off Rubber Road (Near Weekend Market). Good Muslim Indian restaurant serving authentic home-cooked dishes, as well as curries, *roti canai, tosai* and *pillau* rice.
Bombay Masala, Lot 404, Lorong 3A, Rubber Road. 6.30 am - 9 pm (Tues open am). Popular coffee shop serving a good selection of Indian breads, curries and mixed rice dishes. Also has air-con dining section.
Biryani Cafe, 16 Main Bazaar. 8 am-8 pm. *Rojak, murtabak, biryani* rice, *roti canai, tosai*, curries etc., if you can squeeze past the souvenir racks.
Bismillah Restaurant, on Lebuh Khoo Hun Yeang near the Central Police Station, serves North Indian Muslim food. Good *tandoori* chicken, *naan* bread, curries and *biryani* rice.
Meg & Duffy's Cafe, 66 Carpenter St. Good North Indian curries, and a range of tasty Indian breads including potato *roti*.
Buhari Cafe, 157F Jln Satok, near Sunday Market. An old Kuching favourite, famed for its chicken and mutton *biryani*.
Curry House, Lot 409, Section 10, Lorong 3A, Rubber Road. Good range of curries and other mixed rice dishes plus *chapati, roti canai* and *biryani*.
LL Banana Leaf, 7G Lorong 1, Rubber Rd. Tel: 239404. 7.30 am - 9.00 pm (Mon. -5 pm). Authentic South Indian banana leaf meals from RM 4.50 (vegetarian RM 3.50). If the fish curry is available (+RM 3), don't miss it. Also serves *dosai, puri* & *murtabak* breads, plus a great mango lassi. Near the Sunday Market (RM 6 by taxi).
Lyn's Tandoori, Lot 62, No. 10 G, Lg. 4. Nanas Rd. Tel: 234934. North Indian *tandoori* cuisine, *naan* and *kebab dishes*. Just outside the city centre (RM 6 by taxi).
Sri Sham on Jln Ban Hock serves Indian style banana leaf meals and a range of South Indian snacks.

INDONESIAN

Gamelan, Wisma Gaya, off Jln Simpang Tiga, Tel: 410026. Tasty and unusual Indonesian dishes, including regional cooking from Sulawesi. Short taxi ride from centre.

JAPANESE

Minoru, Lot 493-G, Section 10, Rubber Road. Tel: 251021. 11.30 am - 2.30 pm, 6-10.30 pm. Set lunch from RM 16, set dinners RM 20 - 45. Good service and extensive menu. Near Sunday Market.

Momoyama located at Phoenix Plaza, Jalan Song Thian Cheok (next to Liwah Hotel), reasonable priced and food taste good.
Sanga Japanese Food at Lot 164, Jalan Chan Chin Ann, Tel: 012-8832433 (David Liew), 11am-3pm, 6pm - 10pm (mon-fri), 11am - 10pm (sat,sun,PH). Located near Sarawak Plaza, serve good Japanese food.
Ten-Ichi, see Lok Thian listing under "Chinese" for details.
Sri Sarawak, Crowne Plaza Riverside. Serves a Japanese BBQ buffet dinner on Fri & Sat, 6.30pm - 10.00pm.
Sushi King, The Spring Mall. Fresh sushi from the conveyor and other Japanese dishes cooked to order. Open daily.

MALAY

Malay food served in Sarawak is generally not as spicy as that served in Peninsular Malaysia. If you like your food really spicy, just ask for extra chilli. There are not many Malay food outlets in the city centre, but adventurous gourmets can take a taxi or white minibus to the Jln Semariang - Jln Santubong area of Petra Jaya, where there are literally dozens of small family-run Malay restaurants, mostly operating from their own homes (evenings only).

Chillipeppers, Jln Song Thian Cheok (below Liwah Hotel). Popular and economical restaurant serving nasi campur at lunchtimes and rice and noodle dishes throughout the day.
Jubilee, Madinah and **Malaya** restaurants (all on Jln India) serve a range of Malay curries and vegetable dishes. The Jubilee also serves good *roti canai* and *murtabak*.
Moly's Place, Jln Green Hill (behind Harbour View Hotel). Tasty Malay *nasi campur* lunch buffet served daily, plus noodle and rice dishes cooked to order.
Rex Cafe, Main Bazaar. Good mixed rice, *rojak, mee Jawa* and *laksa*.
Rom Orchid Garden (see Accommodation - Homestays) offers authentic spicy Malay cuisine in a delightful kampung garden setting. Open 8 am - 10 pm daily.
Waterfront Cafe, Steamship Building, Kuching Waterfront. Excellent Malay-style all-you-can-eat lunch buffet served daily, plus a wide selection of local and foreign dishes cooked to order. The giant river prawns are a must-try. Open 11 am -11 pm.
Saujana Food Centre. See Food Centre listing.
Satok Road Food Stalls. See Food Centre listing.
Top Spot Food Court. See Food Centre listing.

MALAYSIAN

Aroma Cafe, Jln Tabuan (opposite Borneo Hotel). The only Bidayuh restaurant in the city centre serves traditional Sarawak longhouse food for buffet lunch (from 11.30 until about 1.30, Mon - Fri), and Western and local a la carte dishes until 10 pm.
Home Cook Restaurant. Jln Song Thian Cheok (opp. MAS). Excellent selection of traditional mixed-rice dishes. RM 4-8 for a good feed.
Khatulistiwa Café, Kuching Waterfront. Local and international dishes served in one of the best locations in town. Open 24 hours, the best time to go is around sunset to enjoy the perfect river view.
Nori 10 Café, Jln Ban Hock (near Jln Song Thian Cheok junction). Iban family run cafe offering authentic local favourites.
Singapore Chicken Rice, Jln Song Thian Cheok and branches throughout town. Generous portions of chicken rice and freshly cooked vegetables. 10 am - 9 pm.
Suan Chicken Rice, Jln Tunku Abdul Rahman next to Sarawak Plaza, has mouth-watering steamed or curried chicken served with rice and vegetables. Lunchtime and early evening.

MIDDLE EASTERN

Little Lebanon, 1st Floor, Japanese Building, Sarawak Tourism Complex (Old Court House). Tel: 247523. A selection of Middle Eastern Cuisine and local Malaysian favourites. 11.30 am - 3 pm, 6.30 pm - 10.30 pm. Closed Mondays.

SARAWAK SPECIALITIES



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Sarawak *laksa*, a spicy noodle dish laced with beansprouts, shredded chicken and prawns in coconut gravy, is the great Borneo breakfast, and can be found in many coffee shops. Everyone in Kuching has their favourite laksa stall - some of the best in the city centre are **Kapit Cafeteria** (below Kapit Hotel), **Chong Choon** (Abell Rd, opp. Maybank), and **Choon Hui** (Ban Hock Rd.). *Umei*, a spicy salad of raw marinated fish, limes and shallots, is the traditional dish of the Melanau people, and is often found at hotel buffets or Malay food stalls. Local vegetables are served widely, particularly the two types of crispy jungle fern, *midin* and *paku*. Good local venison (ask for deer meat) is available from some Chinese restaurants. *Pansoh Manok* (Chicken cooked in bamboo) is a great Iban delicacy, and can be found at **Aroma Cafe**, **Bistro 56** and **The Ruai** (see entertainment section).

SEAFOOD



Kuching has superb seafood. One treat that should not be missed is steamed *pomfret* or *manchong* fish. *Assam* prawns, sambal prawns and slipper lobster (*bax*) are other local favourites. One dish that you are unlikely to find elsewhere is *ambal* (bamboo clam), which is usually cooked as a mild dry curry or steamed in Chinese wine. Unusual appearance (looks like a worm in a bamboo shell!) - but tastes superb.

Ah Ka Su Seafood, 17 Jln Green Hill (the sign says "Food Comes First"). Open for lunch and dinner daily. Excellent fish head curry and also well known for its BBQ suckling pig.
Batu Lintang Food Centre, tucked away behind junction of Jln Batu Lintang & Jln Rock. The stalls here serve Kuching's cheapest seafood. Evenings only. Very popular so be prepared to wait for a table.
Benson Seafood, Off Jln Abell. Tel: 255262. Well-established riverside restaurant serving a full range of Sarawak seafood. Very popular at weekends.
Buntal Seafood Village (see Damai and Santubong section).
Open-Air Market (see Food Centre listings).
Pending Seafood Centre, behind Kuching Port in the industrial area. A wide range of stalls selling seafood and local specialities. If you go by taxi arrange a pick-up time.
Rock Road Seafood, 2nd Mile, Jln Rock, Tel: 241575. Popular outlet where you select your dinner from the fish and crustaceans swimming in the tanks lining the walls. Take a taxi. Booking advisable at weekends.

See Good, off Ban Hock Road, opposite Hua Kuok Inn. Tel: 251397/012-8832629. Probably Kuching's most popular seafood restaurant, See Good's cooking style is robust rather than fussy, with strong-flavoured sauces and lots of herbs. Friendly hosts the Kong family will happily guide you through the extensive and exotic menu, and can make some interesting suggestions. Also has the biggest (and cheapest) selection of wines in Kuching. Open lunchtime onwards. Closed 4th and 18th of every month.
Top Spot Food Court offers a wide choice of popular seafood outlets (see Food Centre listings).

STEAMBOAT

A local favourite - an all-you-can-eat seafood buffet which you cook yourself in a gas-heated stewing pot bubbling and sizzling in the middle of your table. If you have never tried before, the staff will show you how it's done. Very Malaysian, excellent value (RM 15-30 per person) and great fun.

Blue Lagoon at the Riverside Majestic Hotel. Poolside BBQ Steamboat Buffet every night.
Coca, also located at the Crowne Plaza Riverside, specialises in spicy Thai-style steamboat plus a la carte dishes.
Hornbill's Corner Cafe, 85 Ban Hock Road, Tel: 016-8565495. Come early as this place really gets busy. The steamboats (RM 16 per person) have a barbecue plate attached for you to grill stingray, marinated beef, lamb and chicken.
Garden Steamboat, Jalan Nanas, Tel: 082-257777.

THAI

Bangkok Thai Restaurant, see Lok Thian listing under "Chinese" for details.
Coca Restaurant, 3rd Floor, Crowne Plaza Riverside Hotel. Tel: 232133. Open 11.30 am -10.30 pm. A la carte or buffet, with the Thai-style steamboat the popular house speciality.
Mango Tree, Jln Crookshank, Tel 235353 Email mangotree@streamyx.com. Local branch of the well-known Thai franchise, in a pleasant garden setting.

VEGETARIAN

If you're a strict vegetarian, be careful when ordering vegetable dishes in non-vegetarian outlets - dried prawns, *belacan* (shrimp paste), shredded chicken, etc., are often used in vegetable dishes. Most cook-to-order restaurants can prepare vegetarian dishes on request.

China Street Vegetarian, Leboh China, off Main Bazaar. Chinese coffee shop set-up serving a wide selection of exclusively vegetarian dishes. 7.30 am - 2.30 pm.
LL Banana Leaf, see Indian section.
Zhun San Yen Vegetarian, Lot 165, Jln Chan Chin Ann. Tel: 230068. 7.30 am - 2.30 pm, 5 pm-8.30 pm. Self-service vegetarian buffet with food sold by the gram. 100 g for RM 1.10 and RM 0.50 for rice. Good selection of tasty dishes.



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Kuching has entertainment and nightlife to suit most tastes. As this guidebook has been produced with tourists in mind, we have not included places that concentrate on lavish business entertainment or where female visitors would feel uncomfortable. Socialising in Kuching is also done in restaurants and coffee shops. Normal pubs usually charge around RM 8-10 for a beer. Live music pubs, hotel bars, plush karaoke lounges and trendier bars are usually RM 12 upwards. Most places have "happy hours," with discounts or 2-for-1 offers. Unless otherwise stated, outlets are open daily from around 5 pm to 1 am (2 am Fri & Sat). The main city-centre areas to find pubs and bars are in and around **Taman Sri Sarawak**, Padungan Road, the **Travillion Mall** (Jln Petanak) and **Jln Bukit Mata**. The listings below are only a small selection of city centre pubs and bars - the inquisitive will make their own discoveries.

PUBS

99, Jln Green Hill (near Harbour View Hotel). Large corner pub near the Jln Green Hill budget hotels.
BarZing, Travillion Mall. Stylish bar plays lounge and chill-out to a relaxed crowd on weekdays, but moves up a gear at weekends. One of the better and safer joints in the Travillion Mall.
Bistro 56, 56 Upper China Street (off Carpenter Street). Tiny backstreet bar run by a friendly Iban/Kelabit couple. Good place to meet locals, enjoy the cheapest gin/vodka tonics in town and try authentic dayak food, especially the excellent barbecued pork.
Cat City, Taman Sri Sarawak, opposite Hilton. Moderately priced hotel-style coffee house set up from breakfast to early evenings, then transforms into a lounge bar with live band and a separate karaoke bar.
The Club, Crowne Plaza Riverside. Cozy pub & cocktail lounge. 5 - 11pm.
The Cottage, Jln Bukit Mata. Friendly corner pub with a good selection of wines and reasonably priced Kilkenny draught stout. Lunchtime till late.
Ipanema, 66 Jln Padungan. Relaxing wine bar with a good wine selection. Also serves draught Kilkenny stout, tapas and a la carte meals.
Gatto Grasso, Taman Sri Sarawak (facing Hilton). Tapas bar with a wide selection of wines and selected draught beers.
Jambu Tapas Bar, 32 Crookshank Road. Tel: 235292. Cosy terrace bar located in the garden setting of a colonial style bungalow. Closed Mondays. 15 mins walk from city centre or take a taxi.
Links, top floor of Civic Centre. Hip bar and club offering great panoramic views of Kuching. Dance and club music at weekends. Guest DJs and special events. Check the website for details, www.links-entertainment.com.my.
Mojo @ Denise, Jln Chan Chin Ann (opp. Kapit Hotel). This former wine bar has mutated into one of Kuching's busiest weekend nightspots, attracting a young party crowd. Still offers a good selection of relatively affordable wines. Often stages alternative events such a live music evenings, poetry readings, etc.
Monsoon, Riverbank Suites, next to Holiday Inn. Friendly waterfront bar - the perfect place to enjoy sunset over the Sarawak River.
Rainforest, Taman Sri Sarawak, opp. Hilton. Noisy, sweaty hip-hop and R&B bar, popular at weekends with a very young and boisterous crowd.
Rejang Lobby Lounge, Holiday Inn Kuching. Cosy hotel bar, popular with the happy hour crowd. Bartender knows how to mix a near-perfect martini.
The Ruai, 3 Jln Green Hill. Laid back ethnic style bar run by a friendly Iban family. Youngish, mostly Dayak crowd enjoy welcoming visitors. Huge selection of music on the PC (a great place to top up your i-Pod), cheap beer, and authentic longhouse food served most evenings.
Sapphire, see Karaoke Lounges.

Senso, Kuching Hilton. Offers a selection of specialty martinis and cocktails with a laid back loungey atmosphere.
Soho, 64 Jln Padungan. Located in an attractive downtown area, the simple earthy décor and jazz/latin/dance-oriented music selection attract a friendly, up-market crowd. Packed at weekends.
The Victoria Arms, Merdeka Palace Hotel. English Pub featuring live bands and serving a wide range of local & imported beers and genuine pub food. Open daily from 11 am to 1 am. Live bands Mon-Sat, 10 pm onwards. Ladies-only session every Friday from 7 - 9 pm, first few drinks on the house.
YN Cellar, Merdeka Palace Hotel, wine bar stocking a selection of wines from around the world.

KARAOKE LOUNGES are dotted all over Kuching, a clear indication of Karaoke's popularity. Songs in Chinese dialects, English, Iban, Malay, Japanese and Korean. City centre karaoke lounges include **Cat City** (Taman Sri Sarawak, opposite Hilton), **Dai Ichi Karaoke** (Jln Tunku Abdul Rahman above Pizza Hut) and **Yuki Pub** (1st Floor, 137-138 Jln Ban Hock). Pick of the bunch for Karaoke first-timers is the friendly, affordable and unpretentious **Sapphire** (Jln Ban Hock). The **Third Mile Area** is teeming with Karaoke lounges, whose names seem to change on a weekly basis. The only area in Sarawak where customers order beers by the case. Take a taxi (RM 7-10) for a Karaoke pub crawl and take pot luck.

CINEMAS

Riverside Cineplex (427061/427064), Riverside Complex, next to Riverside Majestic Hotel. Check local press for details.
Star Cineplex (234077), Level 9, Medan Pelita, top floor of the car park on Wayang/Temple Street.

SHOPPING

Kuching is an excellent place to buy Borneo arts, crafts and curios. Particular items to look out for are Iban *pua kumbu* (hand-woven rugs), wooden hornbill carvings used in rituals, and silver jewellery, Bidayuh basket weaving, Orang Ulu beadwork and woodcarving, and Penan blowpipes and mats. Most of the antique and curio shops are scattered along **Main Bazaar** and **Carpenter Street**, with a few in the Padungan area. Whilst a few are laid out like elegant galleries, most are crammed full with every possible variety of Sarawakian bric-a-brac, and items from Brunei, Kalimantan and Sabah. Well-established outlets on Main Bazaar include **Native Arts, Nelson's Gallery, Rainforest, Sarawak House** and **Arts of Asia**, all offering quality antiques and handicrafts at reasonable prices. The **Telang Usan** hotel has a small outlet specialising in Orang Ulu and Penan crafts, including some excellent modern beadwork and traditional headgear.



Prices of handicrafts are not always fixed so you may have to bargain. If you have the time it's best to shop around and get a rough idea before buying. Certain antiques require an export permit from the Sarawak Museum. The more established shops can assist with this and with shipping arrangements (if required). Most art and craft shops close on Sundays. **Note**: Australian and New Zealand authorities insist that wood and bone handicrafts are fumigated upon arrival.

Artrageously Ramsay Ong (94 Main Bazaar, Tel: 424346 Email: artrageouslyramsayong@hotmail.com. www.artrageouslyasia.com. Showcases the talents of Ramsay Ong, one of Malaysia's leading painters, as well as a range of work from local artists (and occasionally international artists working in Sarawak). They also stock a fine selection of prints, cards, handicrafts and other collectibles.

Atelier Gallery, 104 Main Bazaar (opposite Chinese History Museum), has an unusual and eclectic selection of handicrafts, objets d'art, hand-made furniture and antiques from all over Southeast Asia. The place just oozes style, and visitors are welcome to browse through the extensive library of art and design books. Tel: 243492, Fax: 236675, Email: balihai@streamyx.com.

Galleria, Wesberly House, Rubber Road West, Tel: 429361 Email: siok60@streamyx.com. Well lit and spacious gallery displaying the work of some of Sarawak's most interesting painters, including Melton Kias, Sylvester Jussem, Raphael Scott Ahbeng and Magdalene Tai. Also displays the work of emerging artists from throughout Southeast Asia. Well worth a visit. Short taxi ride from city centre.

Kuching Waterfront Bazaar. Located in the historic Sarawak Steamship Building, this handicrafts centre is a shopper's paradise, with dozens of stalls selling all kinds of Sarawak handicrafts, souvenirs and memorabilia. Open daily until 10 pm, long after the Main Bazaar outlets have closed. Ideal for last minute gift and souvenir shopping.

Sarakraf, Pavilion at 78 Jln Tabuan (see Museums), Ground Floor Sarawak Plaza, plus outlets in Damai and Kuching Airport, Tel: 258771, Fax: 232771. www.sarakraf.com.my. Traditional and contemporary art and handicrafts with a built-in "feel-good factor." Sarakraf was set up to help develop Sarawak's handicrafts industry, most of their products are guaranteed "made in Sarawak," and the producers have been fairly rewarded for their creative efforts. Also stocks a selection of photography books and cassettes and CD's of indigenous music.

Sarawak Craft Council, Round Tower, Sarawak Tourism Complex. Tel: 245652, Fax: 420253. www.sarawakhandicraft.com. Indoor showroom plus outdoor stalls featuring top quality Sarawak handicrafts, whose authenticity is guaranteed by the Sarawak Craft Council. Some of the items on sale are produced by the craft demonstrators who showcase their skills here. Open Mon - Fri from 8.30 am to 5 pm (Sat, Sun and public holidays closed).



Pepper: Malaysia is a major world producer and exporter of pepper, producing around 25,000 tonnes annually, of which 98% is grown in Sarawak. This

valuable cash crop provides an important source of income for over 60,000 rural families. Visitors travelling outside Kuching should not miss the chance to visit a pepper garden. High-quality Sarawak pepper in various forms and packagings, and a host of pepper-based products, are widely available in Kuching. More information from the Malaysian Pepper Board, www.mpb.gov.my.

Pottery: Kuching is well known for its unique, locally-influenced Chinese pottery. Most potteries are located out of town on Jln Penrissen. Visitors are welcome. Just take a bus (STC 3A or 6 from the bus station or outside the post office) or taxi and ask for the potteries. If you don't have time to go and watch the potters at work, many antique and souvenir shops stock their wares.

Bird's Nests: For centuries Sarawak has exported top quality bird's nests to China. Today, a number of retailers in Kuching specialise in the sale and export of these exotic delicacies. Prices are significantly cheaper than elsewhere (e.g. Hong Kong, Singapore or West Malaysia) and the quality is excellent.

Film, Processing & Camera Repairs: Film processing and digital printing laboratories are found all over town. **Kingdom Photography** (Jln Green Hill) is centrally located and consistently produces good quality prints. For camera repairs, **Empress Studios** (1B Jln India) are fast, reliable and reasonably priced. For good prices on digital video tape head to **Top Photo** (Jln Abell).

Bookshops: For books on Sarawak and Borneo try **Mohamad Yahia & Sons** (Basement, Sarawak Plaza & Holiday Inn - they also have some good maps), **Books Unlimited** (in the State Library lobby), **Benzamine Bookshop** (Jln Carpenter) and **Star Company** (30 Main Bazaar). For general books, novels etc., try **Popular Books** (Tun Jugah Centre), **Times Books** (Riverside Complex) or **MPH** (the Spring). For secondhand books try **Book Castle** on Jln Keretapi.

Traditional Music: CD's of traditional music from Sarawak can be found at Sarakraf outlets, handicraft shops on Main Bazaar and the shop at the Sarawak Cultural Village.

Computers & IT: If you need any PC-based computer equipment, software, accessories or repairs, the place to go is **Wisma Saberkas** (corner of Jln Rock & Jln Batu Lintang, short taxi or bus ride from centre). There are dozens of specialist outlets from the 3rd floor upwards. Apple Mac users should try **IT Fusion**, DUBS Commercial Centre, Jln Petanak (behind HSBC Bank), Tel: 378022.

Malls & Supermarkets: For more general shopping, Kuching's newest and largest mall, with the widest range of quality retailers and food outlets, is **The Spring**, on Jln Simpang Tiga about 10 minutes by taxi or bus from the city centre. The smaller city centre malls include **Riverside Shopping Centre** (next to Riverside Majestic Hotel), **Sarawak Plaza** (next to Grand Margherita Hotel) and **Tun Jugah** (across the road from Sarawak Plaza). Other good places for bargain hunting are **Electra House** (next to the Covered Market), **Wisma Hopoh** (Jln P, Ramlee - good for shoes and eyewear) and **Wisma Satok** (Jln Satok). The **India Street** pedestrian area and nearby **Jln Gambier** are good for textiles, kitchenware and hardware. For imported foods and fresh meat, the **Ting & Ting Supermarket** (Jln Tabuan next to Borneo Hotel) is the best bet. The **Boulevard** is suburban mall at 4th Mile Jln Penrissen (25 minutes by taxi).

All the 4 & 5-star hotels have **fitness centres** with **tennis** courts. Crowne Plaza Riverside also has a squash court. There is a **public swimming pool** on Jln Padungan just past the Kuching City South Council office complex. Reservoir Park is a popular local **jogging** spot. **Riverside Superbowl** is a 24-lane bowling centre situated in the Riverside Complex. Damai Beach is the best area for **watersports** (jet-skiing, windsurfing, water-skiing) - see Damai and Santubong section for details.

If you are into **deep sea game fishing**, Kuching is the ideal base, with excellent catches reported, mostly from Tanjung Datu at the western tip of Sarawak. For further details and to arrange trips, contact Sarawak Anglers Association president Mr Alaric Soh, Tel: 014-6800000, Email: alaricsoh@gmail.com. www.sarawakanglers.com.

Golfers have a choice of courses. The 36-hole **Kelab Golf Sarawak** at Petra Jaya is strictly members only. Tel: 440966 for reciprocal membership details. The quaintly named **Prison Golf Club** on Jln Penrissen has 9 holes, green fees RM 30/50, caddies RM 6, Tel: 613544. The Arnold Palmer designed **Damai Golf Course** at Santubong is described in the Damai and Santubong section.

The Hornbill Golf & Jungle Club is located at Borneo Highlands Resort, 70 km from Kuching. Tel: 234266 Email: enquiry@borneohighlands.com.my. www.borneohighlands.com.my. This challenging par-72 course sprawls over rugged mountain terrain, offering the toughest of sporting challenges amidst magnificent rainforest scenery. Definitely not for hackers, this course suits golfers who can play straight, as it's just a single step from fairway to forest. Phone or Email for bookings and green fees.

Kayaking enthusiast Kuching Kayak offers a range of coastal and river **Kayaking Tours** in the wider Kuching area, with prices ranging from RM 48-188 per person. Some of the most popular trips are on the upper reaches of the Sarawak River near Bau. Kayak down jungle streams and pass through some stunning upcountry scenery, whilst catching a glimpse of the life of the local Bidayuh communities along the way. Tel: 235678 or 013-8119669, Fax: 241843, Email:kuchingkayak@gmail.com. More details at www.kuchingkayak.com. Another option is Borneo Trek & Kayak Adventure. Tel: 013-8048338 (Ivy) or 240571, Email: ivy2001@pd.jaring.my. More details at www.borneotrekkayakadventure.com

Caving specialist James Handfield-Jones offers a range of caving trips in the Bau and Serian areas. These include one-day caving adventures and 2 day/1 night caving expeditions that combine caving, travelling overland in 4x4 vehicles, jungle walks and visits to Bidayuh villages. Beginner, Intermediate and Advanced level caving activities are offered and equipment and protective clothing are supplied. Most of the trips are suitable for beginners and do not require a high level of fitness. For further details and pricing contact **Kuching Caving**: Tel: 012-8862347 (James) or 012 268 8675 (Mary). Email: info@kuchingcaving.com. www.kuchingcaving.com

Sarawak is essentially pioneer territory when it comes to **Mountain Biking**. However, a few local riders have discovered some great trails just outside Kuching and further afield. If you need bike parts, or want to link up with local riders, contact Collin Tay at **WG Cycles,** 36A, 1st Floor, Nam Meng Building, Ban Hock Road. Tel: 238239, Email: collin@wgcycle.com. Brief details of popular local bike trails are found on Colin's site www.wgcycle.com.



Rock Climbing: The "Batman Wall", a climbing wall located at the Fairy Caves near Bau, offers a series of challenging rock climbs and abseiling routes. The wall is named after a huge roof section that rock climbers can opt to traverse before they continue up the main climbing wall. The main wall is 60 meters wide and reaches a height of 40 metres. The Batman Wall offers 20 climbing routes and both easy and difficult climbs.

Kuching City Hash: If your idea of fun is running through humid jungle, getting covered in mud, sweat, bites and scratches (and recovering over a few drinks afterwards), the Kuching Chapter of the **Hash House Harriers** would love to hear from you. An excellent way to make new friends. Harriers (Men Only) Tue 5.30 pm, Harriettes (Ladies Only) Wed 5.30 pm, City Hash (Mixed) Sat 4.30 pm. Contact Polycarp Teo Sebom (Tel: 019 8871017) or Jennifer Yap (Tel: 411694 Fax: 413700).

Scuba Diving: Although Kuching is not yet developed as a diving destination (unlike Miri in Northeast Sarawak, gateway to the Luconia Shoals), there are a number of dive sites within easy access of Kuching. For further details contact CPH Travel (Tel: 243708), Kuching Scuba Centre (159 Jln Chan Chin Ann, Tel: 428842, www.kuchingscuba.com) or Sematan Palm Beach Resort (Tel: 712388 or 711112).

USEFUL INFORMATION

Banks & Money Changers: The following is a list of centrally located banks and money changers that handle both travellers cheques (service fee charged) and cash. Banks open Mon-Fri 9.30 am-3 pm, Sat 9.30-11.30 am. The first & third Saturday of every month is a bank holiday.

Alliance Bank, Wisma Ting Pek Khiing, 1 Jln Padungan.
Bank Bumiputra-Commerce, Wisma Bukit Mata Kuching, Jln Tunku Abdul Rahman.
RHB Bank, Head Office Branch, 363 Jln Kulas, Tel: 419294 (near Weekend Market).
Everrise Money Changer. Lot 199, Jln Padungan. Tel: 429354. Mon-Fri 10 am - 9 pm. Sat & Sun 10 am - 6 pm.
Hong Leong Bank, 8 Jln Carpenter.
Hong Xi Enterprise Money Changer, Ground Floor, Tun Jugah.
HSBC Bank, Bangunan Binamas, off Padungan Road (near Cat Statue).
Majid & Sons Money Changer, 45 Jln India. Mon-Sat 9 am - 7.30 pm Sun 9 am - 3 pm.
Maybank, 13 Jln Tunku Abdul Rahman.
Mohamad Yahia & Sons, LGF3, Sarawak Plaza. 10 am - 9 pm (closed Friday lunchtime)
OUB Bank, 1 Jln Tun Haji Openg (corner of Main Bazaar).
Standard Chartered Bank, Wisma Bukit Mata Kuching, Jln Tunku Abdul Rahman.

Doctors, Dentists & Hospitals: The **Clinic** on Main Bazaar (opp. Chinese History Museum) is excellent, well equipped, and very experienced in dealing with tourists' ailments. There are a number of other good clinics around the centre of town. Consultation and simple medication is usually around RM 20-30. Names are not given for legal reasons. There are many good **dentists** in town, and their charges for cosmetic work are low by world standards. Chong Dental & Orthodontic Clinic (No. 480, Section 10, Jalan Rubber, Tel: 422345) are also very good at fitting in emergency patients. **Sarawak General Hospital**, Jln Ong Kee Hui (Tel: 276666), has a first rate Accident and Emergency department - foreign visitors are charged RM50 for consultation. Patients are treated according to medical priority, so please don't expect to go straight to the front of the queue. A cash deposit, insurance card or credit card will be required for in-patient treatment, but prices are low by international standards. **Normah Medical Centre**, a private hospital situated across river on Jln Tun Datuk Patinggi (Tel: 440055), is staffed by specialists with a good reputation both locally and internationally. **Timberland Medical Centre** (Tel: 234991) on Rock Road is alsohighly regarded, as is the **Kuching Specialist Hospital** at Tabuan Jaya (Tel: 365777). If you prefer a traditional approach there are **Chinese Physicians** and **Traditional Massage Centres** located all over town. Prices of **prescription eyewear** (both glasses and contact lenses) are a fraction of those charged in many other countries, whilst the practitioners are of international standard.

Pharmacies: Staff in most pharmacies speak good English and can advise on minor health problems. The following are centrally located, well stocked, and particularly helpful:
Apex Pharmacy, No 125, 1st Floor, Sarawak Plaza. Daily 10 am - 9 pm.
UMH Pharmacy, Jln Song Thian Cheok (opp. MAS) Mon-Sat 9 am to 6 pm.

Laundry and Dry Cleaning Services: Try **Easy Wash** on the corner of Jln Ban Hock & Jln Song Thian Cheok, **Mr Dobi** on Jln Abell (next block along from Pizza Hut), **City Laundry** (Taman Sri Sarawak) or **Spotfree** (105 Jln Padungan). All are centrally located and offer a fast, reliable service.

Places of Worship: The Muslim Council of Sarawak can provide details of Muslim prayer times throughout the state. Tel. 429811, Fax: 416855. Christian churches conduct services in a number of languages. Phone for details.

Anglican, St. Thomas's Cathedral, Jln McDougall. Tel: 240187.
Baha'i Centre, 1 Nanas Garden, Nanas Road. Tel: 252009.
Borneo Evangelical Church (SIB) Lot 1863 Block 10 Lorong 8, Jln Laksamana Cheng Ho, Tel: 425212
Buddhist, Sarawak Buddhist Association, Jln Ong Tiang Swee. Tel: 411906.
First Baptist Church, 5th Floor, Wisma Saberkas. Tel: 413462.
Hindu, Sri Maha Mariamman Temple, 11/2 Mile, Jln Rock, Tel: 257855, 240227. Sri Kaliaman Temple, Jln Ban Hock.
Kuching Mosque, Jln Masjid.
Methodist, Trinity Methodist Church, 57 Jln Ellis. Tel: 411044.
Roman Catholic, St. Joseph's Cathedral, Jln Tun Abang Hj. Openg. Tel: 423424.
Seventh Day Adventist Church, 3rd Mile, Rock Road. Tel: 247746.
Sikh Temple, Jln Masjid.
State Mosque, Jln Bako, Petra Jaya.

Post Office and Telephone Facilities: The main post office is on Jln Tun Haji Openg. Open Mon - Sat 8 am-6 pm, Sun 10 am - 1 pm. From outside the Kuching area, the dialling code is 082. Malaysia's country prefix is 60. To avoid expensive roaming charges, prepaid (or pay-as-you-go) SIM cards for cellular phones are on sale almost everywhere, starting as low as RM30.

Internet Access: Most hotels and guest houses now offer Internet access, and many restaurants and pubs have Wifi hot spots. Charges may apply.

Useful Telephone Numbers

Tourist Police Unit (Kuching Waterfront, open 8am-midnight)	250522
Central Police Station (Opp. Padang Merdeka)	241222
Police Emergency Service	999
Fire	994
Immigration, Federal Complex, Jln Simpang Tiga (bus No. 11)	245661
Australian Honorary Consul Email: diting@tm.net.my	233350 233480 (Fax)
British Honorary Consul Outside office hours, c/o 24 hr British High Commission duty line	250950 012-3220011/22
Brunei Consulate, No. 325 Lorong Seladah, Jln Seladah, 93350 Kuching.	456515 453616 (Fax)
Chinese Consulate, Lot 276, Block 10, Jln Ong Tiang Swee, 93200 Kuching, Email: zhicun@tm.net.my	240344 232344 (Fax)
French Honorary Consul, c/o Telang Usan Hotel Email: wanullok@tm.net.my	415588 425811 (Fax)
Indonesian Consulate, 6th Floor Bangunan Binamas, Jln Padungan (above HSBC Bank) Email: kgri_kuching@hotmail.com	241734 424370 (Fax)
New Zealand Honorary Consul	482177, 482279 (Fax)
Polish Consulate, Lot 154-156 Jln Sungai Padungan	413877
South African Honorary Consul	245587 411300 (Fax)

Malaysian Nature Society, Kuching branch, organises nature walks, trips and other nature-orientated events. Email mnskuching@gmail.com or visit www.mns.org.my.

Sarawak Music Society, organises several concerts each year, for information contact Ms. Yeoh Jun Lin, Tel: 016-8661145

Tourism Information Centres see page 36.
Borneo Convention Centre Kuching, see page 44.
Sarawak Convention Bureau, see page 44.